Augustine, the Trinity, and the Church

A Reading of the Anti-Donatist Sermons

ADAM PLOYD

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and the Church

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Preface and Acknowledgments

I DON'T LIKE the church. After all, the church is made of people, and people (myself included) can be really awful. Of course, I may just be anti-social. During my first few years teaching seminary students, I have come to recognize a much more pervasive dislike and distrust of the church, especially among my fellow United Methodists. Would-be clergy express deep frustration with byzantine bureaucracy, a dated Discipline, interminable ordination checklists, impractical vows of itinerancy, and a host of other obstacles to "real" ministry. Many of these concerns are legitimate and need to be heeded. But all too quickly, loving critique becomes self-righteous condemnation of anything that smells of "institution."

I used to insist that this book was purely historical, an argument about the intersection of Trinity and church in Augustine's anti-Donatist sermons. And it is that. It is a work for the academic guild, for other Augustine scholars, and for any who are interested in the development of these theological topics in late antiquity. But it would be dishonest of me to pretend that my interest is merely historical or only academic. The fact is, I find something deeply compelling about Augustine's vision of church unity, even if I am not planning to swim the Tiber anytime soon. What stirs me is his faith that the church—this broken, imperfect, sinful, all-too-human institution—is somehow also a vehicle for God's redemption of the world. And this "high" ecclesiology does not depend on us getting everything right, on doing the newest and most revolutionary forms of ministry. It depends on the gracious work of God, uniting us to Christ's body through the indwelling of the Spirit who is the very love of God.

So, yes, I often don't like the church. But I am learning how to love it, to trust that, through the painful work of community, God is transforming my heart and mind, training me to see and love the world in a new way through the cultivation of humility, patience, and charity. And when I hear my fellow United Methodists express dissatisfaction with the institution,

I pray that their calls for change might not come at the expense of trusting that the church—whether it be a specific denominational entity or the universal body of believers—is itself a vehicle for God's work in our lives. There is still something to be said for bearing one another's burdens so that we might fulfill the law of Christ (Gal 6:2). Certainly, institutions need to adapt and change to address new missional contexts and social realities. And there are times when the sins of the institution can no longer be patiently ignored or endured. But cynicism must never be mistaken for prophecy, and the most "radical" ministry can never replace the grace that God offers us in the painful life of community. Christ's body was broken on the cross; the brokenness of the church that is Christ's body presents no obstacle to God's redemptive work, unless we refuse to be united to the brokenness that even God did not shun.

This book began, not as a dissertation, but as a seminar paper. In the fall of 2005, during my final year of seminary, Lewis Ayres allowed me to take his doctoral seminar on Augustine. Though I was utterly out of my depth at the time, the experience set the course of my life for the next decade. In that seminar I discovered Augustine's sixth *Tractate on the Gospel of John*. That sermon is a feast of scriptural interpretation, compelling rhetoric, and theological vision. The feast's main course is a dove—first the dove of the Spirit at Christ's baptism, then the singular dove of Song of Songs 6:8, and finally the dove of peace who returns to Noah's ark. Augustine unites these doves into one powerful vision of the church—imperfect, yes, but loving one another with the very love that is God. I suspected that Augustine's juxtaposition of trinitarian and ecclesiological arguments in that sermon was not an accident, and that suspicion led me not only to a mediocre (if late) term paper, but also to the study of Latin, to my first conference paper, to admission into Emory's doctoral program, to my first published article, and to a dissertation. Now I come to the monograph, a revision of the dissertation, and a work that bears little resemblance to that initial twenty-page essay. Then again, I bear little resemblance to that young seminarian. Augustine might have something to say about that.

Lewis Ayres demands the lion's share of my gratitude. (By "demands," of course, I mean "requests nicely with the aid of a Matilda II tank.") Not only did he introduce me to Augustine and encourage me to pursue doctoral work, but as my dissertation advisor he offered constructive criticism on drafts and thoughtful advice on the academic life in general. I owe his entire family—Medi, Anna, Thomas, Iain, and Lucy—for their hospitality in Durham, England. When Lewis left Atlanta for the land of Bede,

Anthony Briggman stepped in to handle much of the day-to-day work of advising. Anthony was more than a placeholder, however, and his careful reading and intellectual generosity remain invaluable. I am also appreciative of the support and guidance of other Emory faculty, especially Philip Reynolds and Ian McFarland, and the commiseration of my Emory colleagues, particularly Parker Diggory, Jessica Smith, Kelly Murphy, Joshua Ralston, Ryan Woods, Brian Gronewoller, S. A. Alexander, Thomas Humphreys, and Mark DelCogliano.

Since coming to Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis, I have been overwhelmed by the enthusiastic support from my faculty colleagues and my students. It is an honor to teach alongside and be challenged by such gifted people. I have also benefited from the community of scholars at the Louisville Institute, particularly my fellows in the Vocation of the Theological Educator post-doctoral cohort.

Given the topic of this book, I would be remiss not to mention my gratitude for the support of my church family, first the Virginia and now the West Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, who continue to nurture me as I pursue full ordination as a Deacon. It is a rare ecclesial community that so values the work of the scholar, and I am humbled and honored by their charge to help bridge the modern gap between faith and understanding.

Earlier versions of some chapters have been published as journal articles. Part of Chapter 2 appeared as "Pro-Nicene Prosopology and the Church in Augustine's Preaching on John 3:13," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 67, no. 3 (2014): 253–264. Parts of Chapter 4 appeared as "The Unity of the Dove: The Sixth Homily on the Gospel of John and Augustine's Trinitarian Solution to the Donatist Schism," *Augustinian Studies* 42, no. 1 (2011): 57–77, and "The Power of Baptism: Augustine's Pro-Nicene Response to the Donatists," *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 22, no. 4 (2014): 519–540. I am grateful to these journals for permission to reuse parts of those articles.

Finally, I offer my most heartfelt appreciation to my family for all of their support. I dedicate this book to my wife, Diane Kenaston, whose patient love I can only describe as a gift of divine grace.

Abbreviations

Title abbreviations for primary texts are provided in the Bibliography.

ACW   Ancient Christian Writers (New York: Paulist Press, 1946–)

ANF   Ante-Nicene Fathers (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1951–)

ATTA   *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Allen Fitzgerald (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999)

Aug-Lex   *Augustinus-Lexicon*, ed. C. Mayer (Basel: Schwabe, 1986–)

AugStud   *Augustinian Studies* (Villanova: Villanova Univ. Press, 1970–)

BA   Bibliothèque Augustinienne (Paris: Desclée, 1949–)

CCL   Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina. (Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–)

CSEL   Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna: Tempsky, 1865–)

DECL   *Dictionary of Early Christian Literature*, ed. Siegmar Döpp and Wilhelm Geerlings, trans. Matthew O'Connell (New York: Herder, 2000)

FC   The Fathers of the Church (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1947–)

GCS   Der griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1897–)

HThR   *Harvard Theological Review* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Divinity School, 1908–)

JECS   *Journal of Early Christian Studies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1993–)

JTS   *Journal of Theological Studies* (London, 1899–)

LCL   Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1912–)

NPNF	A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994)
OOSA	Sancti Ambrosii episcopi Mediolanensis opera. (Milan, 1977–)
PG	*Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Graeca*, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1857–1866)
PL	*Patrologia Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, ed. J. P. Migne (Paris, 1844–1855)
PPS	Popular Patristics Series (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996–)
SC	Sources Chrétiennes (Paris: Cerf, 1942–)
SP	*Studia Patristica* (Louvain: Peeters Press, 1957–)
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1988–)
WSA	The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1990–)
ZAC	*Zeitschrift für antikes Christentum* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1997–)

*Augustine, the Trinity,
and the Church*

Introduction

A TYPICAL APPROACH to the thought of Augustine categorizes it according to his controversies. Against the Manichees, he developed a theology of scripture and of evil as privation. Against the Pelagians, he articulated the doctrines of original sin, grace, and predestination. Against the so-called Arians, he defended and either advanced or corrupted (depending on who is evaluating) the orthodox understanding of the Trinity. Against the Donatists, he promoted the unity of the church and the objective efficacy of the sacraments. Such summaries are heuristically helpful for those who are just getting to know Augustine, but when a reader becomes more familiar with his writings, she begins to suspect that such neat divisions belie the underlying unity and complexity of Augustine's theology. The bishop of Hippo was not merely a polemical or occasional theologian. He was, most often, a preacher. And in his sermons we can most easily apprehend the ways in which seemingly distinct theological questions are mutually informing for Augustine.

This book explores how Augustine's trinitarian theology and his doctrine of the church are intertwined. To do so, I focus on a particular aspect of Augustine's ecclesiology, namely, his defense of charitable ecclesial unity against the rigorism of the Donatist schism. My primary argument is that Augustine uses pro-Nicene principles and exegesis to construct his understanding of the church against the Donatists. In doing so, Augustine depicts a church whose identity and integrity are grounded in the life and work of the triune God, rather than in the relative moral purity of human bishops and the closely guarded boundaries of the visible communion. This is the heart of what we may call Augustine's "trinitarian ecclesiology."

The historical setting for my argument is Augustine's preaching from December of 406 to mid-summer of 407. In this seven-month period, Augustine preached a series of forty-one interweaving sermons,[1] the majority of which address the Donatists, the rival ecclesial communion to the Catholics in North Africa.[2] These sermons include the fifteen *enarrationes* on the Psalms of Ascent (*en. Ps.* 119–133),[3] the first sixteen *tractatus* on the Gospel of John (*Io. ev. tr.*), and the ten *tractatus* on the First Epistle of John (*ep. Io.*). All three groups are exegetical homilies in which Augustine interprets the biblical text line by line for his audience.[4] He also intertwines the three series, typically preaching on John on Sunday and on a Psalm of Ascent during the week, only taking up 1 John during the Easter octave in the spring. Because of this interweaving, which is evident from Augustine's references to previous homilies and his explicit anticipation of future ones, these sermons are not individual, isolated texts but the record of a long discourse that Augustine conducts with his audience. Although homilies from this series are often cited in secondary

1. For the dating of these sermons, see A.-M. La Bonnardière, *Recherches de chronologie augustinienne* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1965), 46–51; and M.-F. Berrouard, "Le date des *Tractatus I–LIV in Iohannis Evangelium* de Saint Augustin," *Recherches Augustiniennes* 7 (1971): 105–168. Both La Bonnardière and Berrouard reject the later dating of 414–416 by Maurice Le Landais and of 413 by Seraphinus Zarb because those options seem too late for the Donatist concerns that pervade *Io. ev. tr.* 1–16. Cf. Le Landais, "Deux annees de predication de Saint Augustin: introduction à la lecture de l'*In Iohannem*," *Études Augustiniennes* 28 (1953): 9–95; and Zarb, "Chronologia Tractatuum S. Augustini In Evangelium Primamque Epistulam Ioannis Apostoli," *Angelicum* 10 (1933): 81–104.

2. Because my focus is on Augustine's theology and not the historical events themselves, I will use the traditional titles of "Catholic" and "Donatist" rather than calling the former "Caecilianists," a more neutral term evoking the bishop whose consecration was at the heart of the initial schism. It should be noted, though, that the Donatist church claimed the title "Catholic" for their own communion.

3. I will use the LXX and Vulgate numbering for the Psalms of Ascent, as these are how the *en. Ps.* are numbered. In modern Bibles, the Psalms of Ascent are Ps 120–134.

4. On Augustine's method of preaching in these sermons, see M.-F. Berrouard, *Introduction aux homélies de saint Augustin sur l'évangile de saint Jean* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 2004), 9–21; Michael Fiedrowicz, *Psalmus vox totius Christi: Studien zu Augustins* Enarrationes in Psalmos (Freiburg: Herder, 1997), 19–33. On Augustine's preaching in general, see Gert Partoens, "Augustin als Prediger," in *Augustin Handbuch*, ed. Volker Drecoll (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 242–249; George Lawless, OSA, "Preaching," in *ATTA*, 675–677; Christine Mohrmann, "Saint Augustin prédicateur," in *Études sur le latin des Chrétiens*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1961), 1:391–402; Mohrmann, "Praedicare-Tractare-Sermo," in *Études sur le latin des Chrétiens*, 2:63–72; Roy Deferrari, "St. Augustine's Method of Composing and Delivering Sermons," *The American Journal of Philology* 43 (1922): 97–123, 193–219.

literature, there is as yet no study that treats these seven months of preaching as a whole, reading the sermons on the Psalms of Ascent alongside those on John and 1 John, and focusing on how Augustine articulates his anti-Donatist theology of the church during this period. This book is, in part, an effort to fill this lacuna.

These sermons, which I will refer to throughout as "our sermon series," are deep wells from which to draw my argument. With respect to Augustine's anti-Donatist concern, they fall in the critical period between the Edict of Unity (405) and the definitive Council of Carthage (411).[5] The sermons contain some of Augustine's most powerful anti-Donatist rhetoric, in which he not only condemns the members of the rival communion but seeks to woo them back to the unity of the Catholic church. He is, therefore, both anti-Donatist and pro-Catholic in his ecclesiology, cultivating a theology of charitable unity against the rhetorical foil of schism.

At the same time, in his constant effort to present the truth of Catholic unity, Augustine also articulates the truth of Catholic teaching. Throughout our sermon series, he alternates between these two themes, seeking, on the one hand, to defend the necessary unity of the church and, on the other, to teach and defend a pro-Nicene understanding of Christ and the Trinity. I will show that this apposition is not an accident; rather, it tells us something about how these seemingly discrete theological loci relate to one another in Augustine's thought. Augustine uses pro-Nicene principles and exegesis to construct his anti-Donatist vision of the church, and in doing so he describes how the church shares in the life of the Trinity through the Son's giving of the Spirit to his own body. The unity of the church is an expression of the unity with which the Trinity operates to establish that church.

Trinitarian and Pro-Nicene

At this point, a few comments are necessary to clarify the terms of my argument. Most significant are the adjectives "trinitarian" and "pro-Nicene."

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5. On these two events, see J. Patout and Robin M. Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa: The Development of Its Practices and Beliefs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 54–57; Serge Lancel, *Saint Augustine*, trans. Antonia Nevill (London: SCM Press, 2002), 287–305. For a recent assessment of Donatist leadership during this period, see Matthew Alan Gaumer, "The Election of Primian of Carthage: The Beginning of the End of Donatist Christianity?" *ZAC* 16 (2012): 292–310.

The phrase "trinitarian ecclesiology" suggests an anachronistic applica-
tion of a fairly recent theological phenomenon. Though I draw this cat-
egory from late twentieth-century theology, I do not mean the exact same
thing when ascribing it to Augustine's preaching. Unpacking the differ-
ence between what I will show in Augustine and what we typically think
of as trinitarian ecclesiology will not only add clarity to my argument but,
I hope, will also suggest how Augustine's version might contribute to
more recent discussions on the relationship between the Trinity and the
church.[6]

In the last decades of the twentieth century, the idea of developing a
trinitarian ecclesiology caught the attention of a wide range of systematic
and constructive theologians.[7] This trend arose from a renewal of interest
in the doctrine of the Trinity in general and from an ecumenical *ressource-
ment* mentality that sought to re-engage the theological texts of the early
church as authoritative or creative conversation partners.[8] Partly because
Augustine's trinitarian thought was considered (for reasons I will discuss
below) to be overly concerned with the one divine essence and not enough
with the irreducibility of the triune persons,[9] these modern trinitarian
ecclesiologies looked primarily to the Greek East, and especially to the
so-called Cappadocians, as the historical sources of their projects. The

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6. Readers may wonder what I mean when I use the word "church" throughout this book.
I leave it intentionally vague. As I will discuss, it is a notoriously complex term in Augustine,
for whom the earthly institution of the Catholic church is a participation in the mystical real-
ity that is the heavenly city. I will keep the word "church" in lowercase, not to diminish its
theological import but to signify that I am not necessarily referring to a particular *contempo-
rary* denominational or ecclesiastical institution, but rather to the church universal. I do not
assume, for instance, that Augustine's observations about the Catholic church of 406–407
are applicable only to the Catholic Church of 2013. I do not wish to distract from my histori-
cal argument, however, by wading too far into such issues here.

7. The prototypical example of this trend is John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies
in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985). See
also Miroslav Volf, *After Our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity* (Grand Rapids,
MI: Eerdmans, 1998); Catherine LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (San
Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991); Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society*, trans. Paul Burns
(Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988); Jürgen Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of
God*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1981/1991), esp. 191–221.

8. For a critical assessment of this *ad fontes* turn to the early church, see John Webster,
"Theologies of Retrieval," in *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*, eds. Kathryn
Tanner, John Webster, and Iain Torrance (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 583–599.

9. See esp. LaCugna, *God for Us*, 81–110. This reading of Augustine also lies at the heart of
the more general portrayal of Western trinitarian thought as inferior to the Eastern tradition
that pervades both Moltmann and Zizioulas.

Gregories of Nyssa and Nazianzus, along with Basil of Caesarea, provided rich language of person and perichoresis that became the key for unlocking the mystery of human communal personhood.[10] Though there is a wide range of nuance in the variety of trinitarian ecclesiologies produced, the general outcome of this project was that the life of the triune God became a model for the life of the church (or of human communities more generally), often because of an assertion of some level of ontological correlation between divine and human personhood.[11]

In this study of Augustine's sermons from 406–407, I will argue that Augustine's anti-Donatist ecclesiology is trinitarian, but in a way quite different from the modern use of the phrase. Augustine never explicitly claims that the nature of the church ought to be understood from a trinitarian perspective. He does not use a theory of trinitarian personhood to

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10. Although this "communal" ecclesiology is what I primarily have in mind when I refer to contemporary trinitarian ecclesiology, so-called missional ecclesiology ought also to be mentioned as another movement that seeks to base the life of the church upon the life of the Trinity. This "post-Christendom" image of the church moves away from the idea of the church as a gathered community and toward an image of the church as created and led by the divine missions, that is, the Father's sending of the Son and (for those who accept the *filioque*) the Father and Son's sending of the Spirit. Missional trinitarian ecclesiology avoids any confusion between the personhood of the Trinity and the personhood of humans in communion, and the idea of trinitarian sending is rooted in the thought of pro-Nicene authors, especially Augustine. However, since in these sermons Augustine is primarily concerned with church unity, the better-known "communal" form of trinitarian ecclesiology is a more useful contemporary foil precisely because it emphasizes the relationship between divine and ecclesial unity in a way that missional trinitarian ecclesiology does not. There are, however, constructive conversations to be had between this form of missional ecclesiology and the trinitarian ecclesiology I describe in Augustine. For a summary and critique of missional ecclesiology, see Cheryl M. Peterson, *Who Is the Church? An Ecclesiology for the Twenty-First Century* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 83–98. See also Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile, *The Missional Church in Perspective: Mapping Trends and Shaping the Conversation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011); Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998).

11. The ontological correlation between divine and human personhood is most present in Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, whose understanding of true "being" as beyond mere substance owes a heavy debt to Heidegger. Other authors are more cautious, providing a caveat about the necessary distinction between divine and human modes of being while still making similar moves to find the heart of human personhood in the relations of the triune persons. See, e.g., the account of correspondence and analogy in Volf, *After Our Likeness*, 191–99. Kathryn Tanner, *Christ the Key* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 207–246, offers what I consider the most salient reconsideration of the relationship between the life of the Trinity and the life of the church (or of society in general). Taking seriously both the Creator/creation distinction and the limitations of human language for understanding the nuances of trinitarian personhood, Tanner focuses instead on "what the trinity is doing for us—what is happening in the life of Christ" (234), an approach that resonates with the type of trinitarian ecclesiology I will show in Augustine.

shape his depiction of human persons. He certainly does not identify what it means to live into the image of God as pursuing a community of radical mutuality that reflects the mutual indwelling of the Father, Son, and Spirit. In short, the accepted categories for trinitarian ecclesiology do not apply to Augustine's thought.

Throughout the following chapters, I will show that Augustine's anti-Donatist ecclesiology may be considered trinitarian in three ways. First, in Chapter 1, I will demonstrate that the church is integral to Augustine's trinitarian theology because we come to know and love the triune God through participation in the church. Second, in Chapters 2 through 4, I will show that Augustine uses pro-Nicene exegesis and principles to construct his image of the church. The most important pro-Nicene elements here are the unity and diversity in the grammatical subject of Christ, the work of the Spirit who establishes unity in both the Trinity and the church, and the principles of common and inseparable operations among the triune persons. Demonstrating the pro-Nicene moves that undergird Augustine's anti-Donatist ecclesiology leads to the third way in which his understanding of the church may be considered trinitarian: the unity of the church is the consequence of trinitarian action that brings the ecclesial community into the life of the Trinity. This final and most significant dynamic of Augustine's trinitarian ecclesiology is a consequence of the previous two points. Augustine not only uses pro-Nicene exegesis and principles to construct his ecclesiology, but in doing so he shows how the common and inseparable operations of the triune persons are the foundation of the church's unity. The unity of the church is a consequence of the unity of the triune God, but not because of an ontological parallel between the two unities.[12] Rather, it is the united operation of the triune persons, who work to establish the church as one in such a way that our unity shares in their unity.

So, to call Augustine's ecclesiology "trinitarian" is to claim (a) that his understanding of the church is intimately connected to his trinitarian theology,[13] and (b) that the church is constituted by the work of the Trinity

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12. Augustine's use of Acts 4:32a that I will examine in Chapter 3 may seem to suggest such an ontological parallel in the unity of the church and the unity of the Trinity, but the pro-Nicene reading of this verse that Augustine builds upon only assumes such a parallel for rhetorical effect. The only way in which there is any sort of analogy between the two types of unity is in the work of the Spirit, not in the ontological meaning of personhood.

13. Though my primary argument is that Augustine's ecclesiology builds upon his trinitarian theology, I will also note times where the latter is shaped by the former.

such that the unity of the church becomes a participation in the life of the Trinity. Further clarification is needed, however, about how the terms "trinitarian" and "pro-Nicene" relate to one another, especially since at times I use them interchangeably. "Trinitarian" here refers to a more general category, to theological reflection on the life and work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To be "trinitarian," though, a theological expression need not explicitly address all three persons. For instance, in Chapters 2 and 3, I focus on the Son and the Spirit, respectively. Yet the Christology and pneumatology explored there is inherently trinitarian because it is articulated within a trinitarian matrix that assumes the Son and the Spirit to be the second and third persons of the Trinity, and the way in which the Son and Spirit are portrayed in their own life and work is necessarily connected to who they are in the one divine life they share with the Father and each other.[14]

If "trinitarian" is the more general theological category, "pro-Nicene" adds historical specificity. The term "pro-Nicene" ought not to be understood to refer generally to all those who supported the council of 325.[15] Neither should pro-Nicene theology be defined simply by the presence of trinitarian formulae such as "one *physis/ousia/natura/substantia*, three *hypostases/persona*," even though these summary phrases develop and solidify within the pro-Nicene theological culture.

I mean something subtler when I talk about pro-Nicene theology. I am referring to a complex of principles and exegetical concerns that govern the grammar and logic of trinitarian (as well as Christological and pneumatological) discourse as it develops in the second half of the fourth century in both the East and the West among those who defend both the consubstantiality and the irreducibility of Father, Son, and Spirit. Though "pro-Nicene" is a permeable category depending on who is defining the limits of the term,[16] for my purposes I want to cast a wide net

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14. On this point, see Robert Dodaro, "Augustine on the Roles of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Mediation of Virtues," *AugStud* 41, no. 1 (2010): 145–163.

15. Such a vague use of the term appears throughout R. P. C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318–81* (London: T & T Clark, 1988).

16. The boundaries of the category are a point of contention for Michel Barnes and Lewis Ayres. Both agree that there is no singular "Nicene" theology in 325 or in the next few decades, and they both see "pro-Nicene" theology as a later development. However, Barnes posits an intermediary category of "neo-Nicene," which includes the later Athanasius, Hilary, Marius Victorinus, etc., prior to the true "pro-Nicene" theologies of, e.g., the Cappadocians. Ayres, on the other hand, maintains a broader use of the category "pro-Nicene" to include those authors Barnes would label as "neo-Nicene." See Barnes, *The Power of God: Δύναμις*

that includes, among others, the later writings of Athanasius, the so-called Cappadocians, Marius Victorinus, Hilary of Poitiers, and Ambrose of Milan. The last three are particularly important as the primary Latin sources for Augustine's engagement with the wider world of pro-Nicene theology and exegesis.

The most salient characteristic of this pro-Nicene culture, both in its Latin and Greek expressions, is that it is primarily concerned with scripture. Pro-Nicene trinitarian theology develops out of polemical disputes about how scripture ought to be read and what it can (and cannot) tell us about who God is. Because of this, certain texts become significant, either as contested exegetical ground or as the interpretive keys for reading other ambiguous passages. The use of the same texts with the same polemical focus becomes one way of identifying those authors who share a common pro-Nicene approach to trinitarian theology. In addition to specific texts, these authors also share forms of argumentation related to these texts. Such arguments—and the ones most important for this study—are those from common and inseparable operations, which govern pro-Nicene exegesis of texts depicting the activity of the divine persons. Thus, even when authors might not use the exact same texts, the presence of the same argument suggests a shared grammar and logic in their trinitarian thought.

This complex of grammar and logic, especially as it is reflected in scriptural exegesis, is what I mean when I refer to Augustine's "pro-Nicene" theology. In our sermon series, Augustine brings this pro-Nicene trinitarian theology to bear upon his anti-Donatist ecclesiology. To unpack how Augustine connects the two topics, my methodology focuses on his exegesis. Given the nature of pro-Nicene theology that I have described, this approach affords the best opportunity to show how Augustine engages and adapts the Latin pro-Nicene tradition and applies it to his anti-Donatist ecclesiology. By focusing on his readings of particular texts, I will also be able to draw

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in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001), 169–172; and Ayres, Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 236–240. Whereas Barnes emphasizes the distinctions between the two groups, Ayres highlights the line of continuity and development that can be traced from one to the other. Deciding who is correct depends on the purpose for which one wants to use the categories. While I agree with Barnes that the differences between the two groups are worth identifying and ought not be minimized, for the purposes of my argument here I will side with Ayres because I want to emphasize the influence of a wider range of authors upon Augustine. Aside from a portion of Chapter 4 (see pp. 160–165), there is no need for me to distinguish between the two closely related groups in order to show what Augustine is appropriating.

connections across the course of the sermon series as well as into his wider corpus. Finally, such an approach places this project within a growing scholarly trend to emphasize the centrality of scripture for Augustine's thought rather than, for instance, Platonism.[17]

In analyzing Augustine's trinitarian thought in the context of Latin pro-Nicene theology and with special focus on his exegesis, I am building upon the "New Canon" Augustine scholarship of Michel Barnes,[18] Lewis Ayres,[19] and others.[20] Over the last two decades, this New Canon

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17. See esp. Michael Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Isabelle Bochet, *Le Firmament de l'Écriture: l'Herméneutique Augustinienne* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 2004). Both of these more recent works are indebted to the classic study of Maurice Pontet, *L'Exégèse de saint Augustin prédicateur* (Paris: Aubier, 1946).

18. Barnes, "Augustine's Last Pneumatology," *AugStud* 39, no. 2 (2008): 223–234; Barnes, "*De Trinitate* VI and VII: Augustine and the Limits of Nicene Orthodoxy," *AugStud* 38 (2007): 189–202; Barnes, "The Visible Christ and the Invisible Trinity: Mt. 5:8 in Augustine's Trinitarian Theology of 400," *Modern Theology* 19, no. 3 (2003): 329–355; Barnes, "Exegesis and Polemic in Augustine's *De Trinitate* I," *AugStud* 30, no. 1 (1999): 43–59; Barnes, "Re-reading Augustine's Theology of the Trinity," in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity*, eds. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 145–176; Barnes, "De Régnon Reconsidered," *AugStud* 26, no. 2 (1995): 51–79; Barnes, "Augustine in Contemporary Trinitarian Theology," *Theological Studies* 56, no. 2 (1995): 237–250.

19. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Ayres, "Augustine on the Spirit as the Soul of the Body, or Fragments of a Trinitarian Ecclesiology," *AugStud* 41, no. 1 (2010): 165–182; Ayres, "*Spiritus Amborum*: Augustine and Pro-Nicene Pneumatology," *AugStud* 39, no. 2 (2008): 207–221; Ayres, "'Remember that you are Catholic' (*serm.* 52.2): Augustine on the Unity of the Triune God," *JECS* 8, no. 1 (2000): 39–82; Ayres, "The Grammar of Augustine's Trinitarian Theology," in *Augustine and His Critics*, eds. Robert Dodaro and George Lawless (London: Routledge, 1999), 56–71; Ayres, "The Christological Context of *de Trinitate* XIII: Towards Relocating Books VIII–XV," *AugStud* 29, no. 1 (1998): 111–139. For a thorough (though now slightly dated) assessment of Barnes's and Ayres's contribution to the field, see Roland Kany, *Augustins Triniätsdenken: Bilanz, Kritik und Weiterführung der modernen Forschung zu "de Trinitate"* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 167–173.

20. Especially significant are Rowan Williams and Basil Studer, both of whom in some ways anticipate and then engage with New Canon scholarship. See Williams, "Augustine's Christology: Its Spirituality and Rhetoric," in *In the Shadow of the Incarnation: Essays in Honor of Brian Daley*, ed. Peter Martens (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2008), 176–189; Williams, "The Paradoxes of Self-knowledge in the *de Trinitate*," in *Augustine: Presbyter Factus Sum*, eds. Joseph T. Lienhard, Earl C. Muller, and Roland J. Teske (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 121–134; Williams, "*Sapientia* and the Trinity: Reflections on the *De trinitate*," *Augustiniana* 40 (1990): 317–332. Studer represents a transitional figure between the old "de Régnon paradigm" and the New Canon school, though at times he seems resistant to completely reject the essentialist reading of Augustine. See Studer, *Augustins* De Trinitate. *Eine Einführung* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2005); Studer, "Zur Pneumatologie des Augustinus von Hippo (*de Trinitate* 15.17.27–27.50)," in *Mysterium Caritatis: Studien zur Exegese und zur*

approach has attempted to subvert the dominant twentieth-century view of Augustine's trinitarian thought, the so-called "de Régnon paradigm," which condemns Augustine for supposedly prioritizing the one divine essence over the irreducibility of the three persons.[21] Typically, the Greek East is seen as superior to Augustine and the subsequent Western tradition on this point.[22] This reading often focuses on Augustine's *On the Trinity*, especially the "psychological model" of *trin.* 8–15, which offers the most damning evidence of Augustine's alleged essentialism.[23] Complementary to this paradigm is the ever-present belief that most of Augustine's theology of the Trinity can be explained by his appropriation of Platonism.[24] In contrast to this previously

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Trinitätslehre in der Alten Kirche (Rome: Pontifico Ateneo S. Anselmo, 1999), 311–327; *The Grace of Christ and the Grace of God in Augustine of Hippo: Christocentrism or Theocentrism?*, trans. Matthew K. O'Connell (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997); Studer, "La teologia trinitaria in Agostino d'Ippona: continuità della tradizione occidentale?" in *Cristianesimo e specifità regionali nel mediterraneo Latino (sec. IV–VI)*, Studia Ephemerides Augustinianum 46 (Rome: Augustinianum, 1994), 161–177; Studer, *Zur Theophanie-Exegese Augustins. Untersuchun zu einem Ambrosius-Zitat in der Schrift "De videndo Deo" (ep. 147)* (Rome: I. B. C. Liberia Herder, 1971). For the influence of Barnes and Ayres on recent scholarship, see Chad Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology: Contextualizing Augustine's Pneumatology* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2012); Kari Kloos, *Christ, Creation and the Vision of God: Augustine's Transformation of Early Christian Theophany Interpretation* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Luigi Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's* de Trinitate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

21. Théodore de Régnon, *Études de théologie positive sur la Sainte Trinité*. 3 vols. (Paris: Victor Retaux, 1892–1898). De Régnon's own intention seems to have been to describe Patristic authors writing in both Latin and Greek by the term "Greek" and to use "Latin" to refer to Scholastics and neo-Scholastics. The appropriation of de Régnon and "his paradigm" that I describe below ought to be understood as a misconstrual of the terms by applying them instead to the Greek East, on the one hand, and Augustine and the West as a whole, on the other. This nuance is helpfully elucidated by Kristin Hennessy, "An Answer to de Régnon's Accusers: Why We Should Not Speak of 'His' Paradigm," *HThR* 100, no. 2 (2007): 179–197.

22. This has for some time been the standard way to present Augustine's trinitarian theology in English survey texts. See, e.g., G. L. Prestige, *God in Patristic Thought* (London: SPCK, 1952); J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1958). These and others are identified by Sarah Coakley, introduction to *Re-Thinking Gregory of Nyssa* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003). See Hennessy, "An Answer to de Régnon's Accusers," 180 nn. 6–7. For a helpful account of the controversy, see Travis Ables, "The Decline and Fall of the West? Debates about the Trinity in Contemporary Theology," *Religion Compass* 6, no. 3 (2012): 163–173. As Barnes notes, mid-twentieth-century French scholars often rejected de Régnon, claiming that Augustine's thought had more "personalism" in contrast to the too abstract Greeks ("De Régnon Reconsidered, 55–56). See, e.g., Henri Paissac, O.P., *Théologie du verbe: saint Augustin et saint Thomas* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1951); Andre Malet, *Personne et Amour dans la théologie de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris: Vrin, 1956); Ghislain Lafont, *Peut-on connaitre Dieu en Jesus-Christ?* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1969).

23. For this way of reading *trin.*, see esp. Michael Schmaus, *Die psychologische Trinitätslehre des heiligen Augustinus* ([photomechanical reprint of the 1927 original] Münster: Aschendorff, 1967).

24. See esp. Olivier du Roy, *L'Intelligence de la foi en la Trinité selon saint Augustin: Genèse de sa théologie trinitaire jusqu'en 391* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1966); Prosper Alfaric,

predominant approach, New Canon scholarship has produced a much richer view of Augustine's trinitarian thought. The psychological investigation of *trin.* 8–15 no longer represents the heart of his trinitarian theology, and placing this work within the wider context both of his own writings (including sermons such as our series from 406–407) and of the pro-Nicene tradition reveals that Augustine is as committed to the irreducibility of the three divine persons as he is to their unity. Furthermore, New Canon scholarship has lifted up the biblical heart of Augustine's trinitarian thought and has revealed the limited scope of his appropriation of Platonism.[25] This more nuanced picture of Augustine's trinitarian thought will allow readers to see the connections that he makes between the Trinity and the church in these sermons in ways that would have otherwise remained opaque.

The Church and the Donatists

One of my goals in highlighting and analyzing the trinitarian dynamics at work in these anti-Donatist sermons is to broaden the parameters for interpreting and appreciating Augustine's ecclesiology. In doing so, I will not often contradict the classic studies of the issue; instead, I will advance their arguments by connecting their observations to Augustine's pro-Nicene trinitarian theology. In particular, I build upon the work of Lamirande and Borgomeo, who both argue that the church in this world already shares in the life of the heavenly church.[26] Tying their arguments to Augustine's appropriation of pro-Nicene principles and exegesis will provide a better understanding of how the sojourning church shares in that heavenly reality. The trinitarian dynamics that I highlight are sometimes floating just below the surface of these other studies, but I intend to bring them

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L'Évolution intellectuelle de saint Augustin: Du Manichéisme au Néoplatonisme (Paris: Emile Nourry, 1918).

25. For a nuanced assessment of Augustine's Platonism, see Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 13–20.

26. Pasquale Borgomeo, *L'Eglise de ce temps dans la prédication de saint Augustin* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1972); Émilien Lamirande, *L'Eglise céleste selon saint Augustin* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1963). See also Stanislaus J. Grabowski, *The Church: An Introduction to the Theology of St. Augustine* (London: Herder, 1957); Joseph Ratzinger, *Volk und Haus Gottes in Augustins Lehre von der Kirche* (St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1954/1992); Emile Mersch, *The Whole Christ: The Historical Development of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body in Scripture and Tradition*, trans. John R. Kelly (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Co., 1938), esp. 384–440. For a more recent effort, see David C. Alexander, *Augustine's Early Theology of the Church: Emergence and Implications, 386–391* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008).

to the forefront and make explicit what earlier considerations often leave implicit.[27]

Methodologically, expanding the parameters for studying Augustine's ecclesiology means moving beyond the typical historical context in which it is usually examined. Although the North African tradition is a rich field from which to harvest the terms of the Catholic/Donatist dispute, a wider range of theological soil nourished Augustine. Even if, as Maureen Tilley has suggested, "Donatism represents the ancestral heritage of North Africa and Augustine represents an Italian imposition,"[28] then to understand Augustine's anti-Donatist thought, we need to look to those Italian sources, especially Ambrose, and to the larger Latin tradition with which Augustine engaged north of the Mediterranean. As we move northward, we ought also to push beyond the accepted topical borders of sacramental theology and ecclesiology. Our sermon series, in which Augustine makes connections that are less apparent in his more focused treatises, provides the opportunity for such an expansion.

The primary historical context for my reading of these sermons, then, is not the traditional North African sources of Cyprian,[29] Optatus,[30] and

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27. Borgomeo offers a juicy hint at this trinitarian dynamic that he sadly leaves unelaborated: "Si donc, d'un côté, l'Église du temps apparaît déjà comme l'amorce de notre insertion dans la vie trinitaire, de l'autre, la doctrine de son unité vitale se révèle, bien au-delà des exigences de la polémique anti-donatiste, comme le noyau le plus authentique de l'ecclésiologie augustinienne" (*L'Eglise de ce temps*, 189).

28. Maureen Tilley, "Redefining Donatism: Moving Forward," *AugStud* 42, no. 1 (2011): 22. See also Horace E. Six-Means, *Augustine and Catholic Christianization: The Catholicization of Roman Africa, 391–408* (New York: Peter Lang, 2011), 44–52. Six-Means argues that Milan is the "birthplace of Augustine's Catholicism," but that his return to his native African context reshaped the meaning of the "Milan experience" (44). More generally, Six-Means's use of the theory of confessionalization, which has helped redefine early modern historiography, is a fruitful lens through which to see Augustine's defense and promotion of what he understood to be true "Catholic" Christianity.

29. There has been much recent work on the influence and appropriation of Cyprian in the Donatist/Catholic dispute. See esp. the work of J. Patout Burns: "Baptism as Dying and Rising with Christ in the Teaching of Augustine," *JECS* 20, no. 3 (2012): 407–438; Burns, "Appropriating Augustine Appropriating Cyprian," *AugStud* 36, no. 1 (2005): 113–137; Burns, "The Eucharist as the Foundation of Christian Unity in North African Theology" *AugStud* 32, no. 1 (2001): 1–23; Burns, "Christ and the Holy Spirit in Augustine's Theology of Baptism," in *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian*, ed. Joanne McWilliam (Toronto: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1992), 161–171. Similarly, Matthew Gaumer, "Dealing with the Donatist Church: Augustine of Hippo's Nuanced Claim to the Authority of Cyprian of Carthage," in *Cyprian of Carthage: Studies in His Life, Language, and Thought*, eds. Henk Bakker, Paul van Geest, and Hans van Loon (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 181–202.

30. On the significance of Optatus, see Burns and Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa*, 198–199, 609–610; Mark Edwards, introduction to *Optatus: Against the Donatists*

Tyconius,[31] though their influence will not be ignored. Instead, I focus on the fourth-century Latin pro-Nicene tradition—especially Hilary and Ambrose—as the proximate intellectual context within which to interpret Augustine's theology in these sermons. This contextualization will in turn allow for a better appreciation of how Augustine creatively appropriates the North African tradition to refute the Donatists who, at least on the surface, have a stronger claim to it.

By showing how Augustine uses pro-Nicene principles to shape his anti-Donatist ecclesiology in these sermons, I also hope to add to our sense of the theological nuances at work in the Donatist/Catholic dispute as a whole.[32] It has been sixty-five years since the last Anglophone monograph on Augustine's anti-Donatist theology in its entirety.[33] There are, I think, two reasons for this. First, there seems to be a sense that the theological aspects of the debate have already been sufficiently—perhaps exhaustively—identified, analyzed, and assessed.[34] Second, and partially as

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(Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997), xi–xxxi; Bernhard Kriegbaum, "Zwischen den Synoden von Rom und Arles. Die donatische Supplik bei Optatus," *Archivum Historiae Pontificae* 28 (1990): 23–61; Robert Eno, "The Work of Optatus as a Turning Point in African Ecclesiology," *Thomist* 37 (1973): 668–685.

31. On Augustine's use of Tyconius, see Karla Pollmann, "African and Universal Elements in the Hermeneutics of Tyconius and Augustine," in *Augustinus Afer*, ed. Pierre-Yves Fux (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 2003), 353–362; Paul Harvey, "Approaching the Apocalypse: Augustine, Tyconius, and John's Revelation," *AugStud* 30, no. 2 (1999): 133–151; Charles Kannengiesser, "Augustine and Tyconius: A Conflict of Christian Hermeneutics in Roman Africa," in *Augustine and the Bible*, ed. Pamela Bright (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 149–177; Maureen Tilley, "Understanding Augustine Misunderstanding Tyconius," *SP* 27 (1993): 405–408; William S. Babcock, "Augustine and Tyconius: A Study in the Latin Appropriation of Paul," *SP* 17 (1982): 1209–1215.

32. For a summary of Donatist historiography, see Tilley, "Redefining Donatism"; Carlos Garcia Mac Gaw, *Le Problème du Baptême dans le Schisme Donatiste* (Paris: De Boccard, 2008), 9–14.

33. Geoffrey Grimshaw Willis, *Saint Augustine and the Donatist Controversy* (London: SPCK, 1950).

34. There are some notable exceptions. As previously noted, J. Patout Burns has done much to keep the theological analysis of Augustine and Donatism alive. Anthony Dupont and Matthew Gaumer, "*Gratia Dei, Gratia Sacramenti*: Grace in Augustin of Hippo's Anti-Donatist Writings," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis* 86, no. 4 (2010): 307–329, connects Augustine's anti-Donatist theology to his later anti-Pelagian writings, making helpful connections, similar to those I hope to make between Augustine's trinitarian thought and his anti-Donatist ecclesiology. In addition, Marueen Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa: The Donatist World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), offers a more nuanced assessment of Donatist theology and exegesis as it develops throughout the fourth century. See also, Gerald Bonner, *St. Augustine of Hippo: Life and Controversies* (Norwich: Canterbury Press, 1963/2002), esp. 237–311; Bonner, "*Christus Sacerdos*: The Roots of Augustine's Anti-Donatist Polemic," in *Signum pietatis: Festgabe für Cornelius Petrus Mayer, OSA, zum 60. Geburtstag* (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1989), 325–339.

a consequence of the first reason, the dominant trend in the field has been to treat the Donatist/Catholic conflict in primarily socio-political terms.[35] Although such a focus has shed much-needed light on the non-theological aspects of the religious dispute,[36] it sometimes belies a dismissive (and, at worst, disparaging) attitude toward the theological issues that, some contend, were merely instruments of political power struggles.[37]

35. The key turning point in twentieth-century Donatist historiography is W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1952). Frend argues that the intransigence of the Donatist schism was due to the divide between rural and urban parts of North Africa and the former's rejection of Roman imperial rule. See also the francophone counterpart to Frend's work, J.-P. Brisson, *Autonomisme et christianisme dans l'Afrique romaine de Septime Sévère à l'invasion vandale* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1958). Later scholars have undermined the simplicity of Frend's schema. See esp., Emin Tengström, *Donatisten und Katholiken: Soziale, wirtschaftliche und politische Aspekte einer nordafrikanischen Kirchenspaltung* (Gothenburg: Elander, 1964). For the reclamation of "religious" as a proper category for understanding the Donatist conflict, see Bernard Kriegbaum, *Kirche der Traditoren oder Kirche der Märtyrer? Die Vorgeschichte des Donatismus* (Vienna: Tyrolia, 1986).

36. The issue of violence and imperial coercion under the auspices of religious conflict is one of the most generative areas of research on Donatism. See Brent D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Michael Gaddis, *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Paul-Albert Février, "Religion et domination dans l'Afrique romaine," *Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne* 2 (1976): 305–336; Robert A. Markus, "Christianity and Dissent in Roman North Africa: Changing Perspectives in Recent Work," in *Schism, Heresy, and Religious Protest*, ed. Derek Baker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 21–36; Ernst Grasmück, *Coercitio: Staat und Kirche im Donatistenstreit* (Bonn: Ludwig Rührscheid, 1964); Peter Brown, "St. Augustine's Attitude to Religious Coercion," *Journal of Roman Studies* 54 (1964): 107–116; Brown, "Religious Coercion in the Later Roman Empire: The Case of North Africa," *History* 48 (1963): 285–305; Brown, "Religious Dissent in the Later Roman Empire: The Case of North Africa," *History* 46 (1961): 83–101.

37. For example, despite his emphasis on religion as historical motivation, Brent Shaw hints at his disdain for such matters, especially for theology:

> Events claimed as peasant rebellions and revolutionary social struggles turn out, on closer inspection, to be smaller and meaner things. The principal actors were moved by the logical, if fulfilling, credulities of religious faith and by not much more. What I have encountered is a history of hate—a story of intimate dislike that was motivated by the profound love for one's own people, beliefs, communities, and traditions. ... Insofar as they pertain to the problems that confront us, however, matters such as the essence of a Trinitarian god, the nature of the mystical or real body of Christ, fine distinctions in the dispensation of grace, the idea of predestination, or the doctrine of original sin are not our direct concern here. ... In the end, everything these people did, every communal conflict and personal battle to which they committed themselves out of a belief in transcendent values, became meaningless and worthless. It is enough to give history a bad name (*Sacred Violence*, 1–2, 5).

Similarly, see Mac Gaw, who argues that theology is an appropriate topic for historical analysis but ultimately subordinates it as a tool of ecclesiastical power struggles (*Le Problème*

Fortunately, the most influential scholars of late antiquity have refused to reduce theology to a meager manifestation of material power conflicts, instead depicting how theology helped shape—and of course was shaped by—the complex culture of post-Constantinian Christianity and society.[38] This perspective lies behind the theological work of this book. By showing how Augustine's anti-Donatist ecclesiology draws upon his pro-Nicene trinitarian theology, I question the traditional categories for speaking about the Donatist/Catholic conflict. The distinction between schism and heresy, as concerning discipline and doctrine, respectively,[39] does not actually separate the Donatists from the "Arians" in Augustine's theology as much as scholars usually assume, even despite what Augustine himself famously says on the matter.[40] In these sermons, by uniting his anti-Donatist ecclesiology and trinitarian theology, Augustine demonstrates how both theological loci are concerned with the Christian life as a whole.[41] The Donatists, in failing to participate in the unity of the church, also fail to participate in the church's orthodoxy. This orthodoxy is more than the acceptance of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. It is participation in the unity of the

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du Baptême, 33–36). For a discussion of the relationship between theology and politics in fourth-century historiography, see Joseph T. Lienhard, "From Gwatkin Onwards: A Guide Through a Century and a Quarter of Studies on Arianism" *AugStud* 44, no. 2 (2013): 265–285.

38. Most significant here is the work of Peter Brown, Robert Markus, and Averil Cameron. In addition to the works previously cited, see Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1967/2000), esp. 207–255; Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), esp. 105–153; Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire: The Development of Christian Discourse* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

39. On the distinction between heresy and schism, see Maureen Tilley, "When Schism Becomes Heresy in Late Antiquity: Developing Doctrinal Deviance in the Wounded Body of Christ," *JECS* 15 (2007): 1–27; Geoffrey D. Dunn, "Heresy and Schism in Cyprian of Carthage," *JTS*, n.s. 55 (2004): 551–574; Rowan Williams, "Defining Heresy," in *The Origins of Christendom in the West*, ed. Allen Kreider (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 313–336; Gerald Bonner, "*Dic Christi Veritas Ubi Nunc Habitas*: Ideas of Schism and Heresy in the Post-Nicene Age," in *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R. A. Markus*, eds. William E. Klingshirn and Mark Vessey (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 63–79.

40. See *Cresc.* 2.3.4; *f. et symb.* 10.21. See also, *haer.* 69.1, where Augustine clarifies that the Donatists, by persisting in their schism, enter into heresy. My argument will show that this is not just a cynical move to apply anti-heresy legislation to the Donatists but an affirmation of the nature of the church as a vehicle for maturation in knowledge and love.

41. Whenever I speak of Augustine "uniting" these different theological topics, I do not intend to suggest that he ever considered them truly distinct loci. However, I find such phrasing helpful as a heuristic guide into these connections that are intrinsic for Augustine but distinct for most modern readers.

church in such a way that one's faith is formed, nurtured, and brought to fulfillment, both in the maturation of one's mind and in the cultivation of love of God and neighbor. Augustine's anti-Donatist polemic cannot be fully understood without appreciating why he believes the Donatists ought to be part of the Catholic communion. It is about more than solidifying power. It is about participation in the body of Christ through the indwelling love of the Holy Spirit whom the Son gives to his own body in baptism. This vision of a church whose life is defined by the work of the Trinity arises from Augustine's use of pro-Nicene principles and exegesis to articulate his anti-Donatist ecclesiology in these sermons from 406–407.

Chapter Outline

My description of how Augustine unites the Trinity and the church in these sermons begins in Chapter 1 by focusing on the growth in knowledge and love that defines the Christian life for Augustine. Here I will argue that Augustine brings his conception of knowledge and love—a moral epistemology that he develops as the key to his trinitarian thought—to bear upon his anti-Donatist ecclesiology by making the church both an object of knowledge and love as well as the primary vehicle whereby our thought and desire are reformed. Chapter 2 takes up the image of the church as the body of Christ to show how Augustine understands the ecclesial community to be the vehicle for the reformation of our hearts and minds that I described in Chapter 1. Through participation in the unity of the church, Christians are incorporated into the grammatical subject of Christ such that we also share in his ascent to heaven, which is indicative of our ascent to sight of the Son's divinity as he is equal to the Father. Chapter 3 turns from the Christological to the pneumatological to show how the unity of the body of Christ is established by the love of the Holy Spirit. Augustine connects the life of the church to the life of the Trinity by connecting the redemptive work of the Spirit in the church to the eternal *proprium* of the Spirit as the mutual love of Father and Son. The Spirit gives to the church that which he eternally is, namely, the love that constitutes unity. Finally, Chapter 4 takes up the central issue of baptism, the sacrament that serves as a lightning rod for the wider Donatist/Catholic ecclesiological disputes. Here I will argue that Augustine appropriates pro-Nicene principles about divine power and common and inseparable operations to redefine both the validity and efficacy of baptism. In baptism, the triune God incorporates

the church into the life of the Trinity through the Spirit who is given by the Son to his own body.

By examining the way in which Augustine deploys pro-Nicene exegesis and principles in his sermons against the Donatists, I hope to show that Augustine's ecclesiology is trinitarian not because he sees an ontological analogy between human personhood and divine personhood, or because the church emulates the mutual indwelling of the Trinity, but rather, because the church is constituted by the life and work of the Trinity into whose life we are incorporated even as we grow in knowledge and love of each other and of God.

I

To Know and to Love

Introduction

In early December of 406, amidst the customary crowd filling the Basilica Pacis in Hippo Regius, Augustine—by now the best known and most influential Catholic bishop of North Africa—began a seven-month period of expository preaching, moving line by line through the Psalms of Ascent, the first few chapters of the Gospel of John, and, in honor of the Easter octave, the First Epistle of John. Like any good preacher, Augustine shaped his exposition to respond to his context. In the case of these sermons, the unavoidable topic was the perduring schism between Donatist and Catholic Christians in North Africa. As the leading polemicist for the Catholics, Augustine crafted these sermons to support the cause of ecclesial unity, or at least unity with his *ecclesia*. In this sense, these are definitively anti-Donatist sermons.

Yet for Augustine, an anti-Donatist sermon does not simply attack the positions of those outside the church (though he rarely misses a chance to do so). Augustine's primary strategy for defeating the Donatists is to build up his own community.[1] We may also describe these sermons, therefore, as pro-Catholic. In these seven months of preaching against the rival communion, Augustine shapes how his own church understands its identity.

I want to begin here, with what it means to hear Augustine preaching sermons against the Donatists but also in support of his own vision of Catholic unity. In later chapters I will draw out the stronger connections between Augustine's pro-Nicene understanding of the Trinity and

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1. On this strategy, see Jane Merdinger, "On the Eve of the Council of Hippo, 393: The Background of Augustine's Program for Church Reform," *AugStud* 40, no. 1 (2009): 27–36.

his anti-Donatist ecclesiology. First, however, I want to show how and why Augustine unites these topics in a more general way as he seeks to cultivate a Catholic community. Specifically, Augustine's preaching on the Trinity and the church in these sermons converges in a common moral epistemology.

By "moral epistemology" I mean Augustine's account of how we advance in knowledge of God through the reformation of our desire.[2] This connection between Augustine's trinitarian theology and his anti-Donatist ecclesiology by way of his moral epistemology is uniquely accessible through his sermons because the primary goal of his preaching is the training of souls. Moreover, this connection between knowledge and love is an integral part of Augustine's trinitarian theology, which he has already articulated by 405 in the first book of *On the Trinity* (*trin.* 1). The same moral epistemology permeates these sermons, not only when Augustine discusses Christ and the Trinity, but also when he preaches on the church against the Donatists. Thus, I argue, Augustine brings his conception of knowledge and love—a moral epistemology that he develops as the key to his trinitarian thought—to bear upon his anti-Donatist ecclesiology by making the church an object of knowledge and love, as well as the primary vehicle whereby our minds and desires are reformed.

I will begin by describing the role of Augustine's preaching in cultivating knowledge and love in his audience as a way to train and rehabilitate their minds and desires. This explains why Augustine unites seemingly discrete theological topics in his sermons in a way that he does not in his treatises. Next, I will examine *trin.* 1 to demonstrate that Augustine's moral epistemology is already integral to his trinitarian theology by the time of our sermon series.

I will then turn to the sermons themselves to show that Augustine not only deploys this conception of knowledge and love in reference to Christ and the Trinity, but he also articulates his ecclesiology within the

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2. Please note that I use "epistemology" and related terms here and throughout in a general sense of "how we come to know" both God and the world. Such terms ought not to be read with any specific, technical, or modern connotations about the possibility and conditions of any and all knowledge. Similarly, I do not use the term "moral" in opposition to "ethical." Rather, I use "moral" in the same way one might describe a "moral psychology" that accounts for the affective desires of the soul and the orientation of the soul toward various objects of desire. Though it is this desire in the soul that terminates in discrete actions, I am less concerned here about that mechanism of volition and act than I am with the proper ordering of desire and love.

same moral epistemology. In both the trinitarian and ecclesiological conversations, Augustine highlights the ability to distinguish between material and spiritual realities as the key to maturation in knowledge and love. In this way, Trinity and church become united under a single theological discourse as Augustine trains his audience in these sermons.

Knowledge, Love, and the Purpose of Preaching

There is a distinct difference in genre between Augustine's sermons and his treatises. The extended analysis and topical focus that one finds in works such as *On the Trinity* and *On Baptism* are absent from the sermons, which often appear, at first reading, to be wandering snippets of Augustinian exegesis, cobbled together into brief rhetorical performances. The way in which Augustine's sermons bounce between topics is one of the key difficulties in unpacking their theological significance, but this is also the gift that they offer to those curious about how the traditional loci of his thought fit together into an organic whole. If one approaches Augustine the preacher with a generous hermeneutic, then one can presume that for the master rhetor there is significant conceptual overlap between the theological topics he places in apposition. The possibility of drawing out these conceptual connections increases when one moves from a single sermon in isolation to a series of forty-one sermons preached in a seven-month span. Where topics repeatedly recur in close proximity, as the Trinity and the church do in our sermon series, the reader receives greater warrant for exploring the topics in tandem. This intertwining of Trinity and church is not evidence, however, of a unique experiment in Augustine's thinking. It is, rather, symptomatic of his homiletic approach and, as such, it provides the reader with a unique glimpse of the connections that lay behind Augustine's more focused discussions of these topics in other works.

   This characteristic of Augustine's preaching makes sense when viewed in the context of his overall homiletic purpose, which Paul Kolbet has described as "psychagogy."[3] By "psychagogy," Kolbet means the Hellenistic therapeutic

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3. Paul R. Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls: Revising a Classical Ideal* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010). See also the similar themes in Michael Cameron, "*Totus Christus* and the Psychagogy of Augustine's Sermons," *AugStud* 36, no. 1 (2005): 59–70, which engages earlier work by Kolbet; and Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere: Augustine's Early Figurative Exegesis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), esp. 30–41, which describes Augustine's discovery of the rhetorical function of scripture's "arrangement" and "decorum," concepts that Augustine then translates into his own preaching on scripture, thus linking his exegetical and homiletic methods.

program of training the soul through a blend of philosophy and rhetoric, which was taken up by cultured Christian bishops in the fourth century.[4] Kolbet's study traces the idea from Plato to Cicero, who is the primary source of Augustine's understanding of the theory. His analysis culminates in an examination of Augustine's homiletic practice.[5] Through his sermons, Augustine, the former court rhetor, "used the medium with which he was most comfortable to pass on both the critical skills required to form a distinct Christian identity and the constructive guidance necessary to sustain it."[6] In his homiletic practice, Augustine does not simply teach the truths of Christian scripture and belief. He trains his audience to pursue those truths themselves:

> If congregations were to profit from his homilies, they could not be content with passively appreciating his eloquent words. They needed to press beyond them actively to apprehend wisdom for themselves. ... He believed, however, that openly commending spiritual truth to those whose carnal minds cause them to treat it with disdain was irresponsible. To prevent this misstep, he appealed to New Testament texts, informed by psychagogic theory, which counseled teachers to temper their aims with rhetorical principles. He knew well that St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians about feeding them with milk instead of solid food because he could not speak to them about spiritual things so long as they remained carnal.[7] ... Day after day, Augustine struggled to root out false propositions, one at a time, from the inner field of hearts, like so many weeds. He

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4. For Kolbet's expanded definition of "psychagogy," see *Augustine and the Cure of Souls*, 7–9. The most significant precedent for Kolbet's work on Augustine is Henri-Irénée Marrou, *Saint Augustin et la fin de la culture antique* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1938), which offers a still standard investigation of Augustine's engagement with and transformation of the liberal arts. See esp. 211–276 on the liberal arts in general and 299–328 on Augustine's understanding of *exercitatio animi*. This is what lies behind Augustine's psychagogic approach to preaching. One part of Kolbet's description of psychagogy that is underdeveloped is his articulation of the role of grace in the process. As a complement to Kolbet, then, see Carol Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology: An Argument for Continuity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 238–287. Though I do not explicitly engage the issue of grace here, my description of Augustine's moral epistemology operates within the dynamics that Harrison describes.

5. Kolbet, "The Christian Rhetor," chap. 7 in *Augustine and the Cure of Souls*, 167–197.

6. Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls*, 180.

7. Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls*, 177.

believed that the impediments inhibiting the progress of souls were both affective and intellective.[8]

This movement from milk to solid food, from the carnal to the spiritual, through the removal of both intellectual and affective impediments, defines Augustine's psychagogic preaching. Kolbet's analysis particularly suits the homiletic method that Augustine employs in our sermon series. Moreover, this psychagogic concern unites Augustine's trinitarian theology and his anti-Donatist ecclesiology within these sermons.

The key for unpacking Augustine's psychagogy of both Trinity and church in these anti-Donatist sermons is what Kolbet identifies as the "affective and intellective" elements of the soul's progress. These combine in what I call Augustine's "moral epistemology," that is, the connection between the intellectual process of coming to know God and the reformation of desire that accompanies and equips this process.[9] This cultivation of knowledge and love is integral to Augustine's theology of the Trinity and, as I will demonstrate, his approach to the church. This moral epistemology operates through a series of related conceptual contrasts: material and spiritual, temporal and eternal, created and uncreated. Though these pairings are not synonymous with one another, they function in concert as the categories that guide Augustine's method of training the mind and

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8. Kolbet, *Augustine and the Cure of Souls*, 188.

9. It is notoriously difficult to parse the relationship between the affective and the intellective in Augustine. For instance, James Wetzel argues that Augustine maintains the Stoic identification of virtue with knowledge. This leads Wetzel to blend the affective and the intellective elements of Augustine's psychology. See Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). In contrast, John Rist sees them more as related yet discrete topics. In direct contrast to Wetzel, Rist claims, "while according to the Stoics all forms of virtue are modes of right reason, for Augustine they have become modes of love." *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 161. Though my reading of Augustine is closer to Rist on this point, I also want to highlight the way in which the affective and the intellective are mutually informing (though not identical) for Augustine, a point Rist himself often makes. More recently, Chad Gerber has explored the development of the same knowledge/love connection in Augustine's earliest works with particular attention to the role of the Spirit in leading us back to knowledge and love of God. See Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), esp. 126–145. For the relationship between knowledge and desire in Augustine's trinitarian thought, see Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), esp. 121–171; Luigi Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's* de Trinitate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), esp. 170–183; Jean-Baptiste du Roy, "L'expérience de l'amour et l'intelligence de la foi trinitaire selon saint Augustin," *Recherches Augustiniennes* 2 (1962): 415–445.

reforming the desire of his congregation. The material mind must be recast as spiritual at the same time as one's desire is reoriented toward spiritual things. This reformation includes a reorientation of both thought and desire from the temporal to the eternal, and from the created to the Creator. This moral epistemology unites Augustine's trinitarian theology and anti-Donatist ecclesiology into a single theological discourse within our sermon series.

The Moral Epistemology of De Trinitate *1*

Before turning to our sermon series, though, I must first establish that Augustine's understanding of the relationship between knowledge and love is integral to his trinitarian thought as it is expressed in the first book of *On the Trinity* (*trin.* 1). Though the dating of the various books of *trin.*, along with their respective layers of redaction, is an endeavor plagued by continual revision, there is some consensus that the majority of *trin.* 1 was written between 400 and 405.[10] Unpacking what Augustine is up to in *trin.* 1, therefore, will provide the theological context for understanding the way knowledge and love operate with respect both to the Trinity and to the church in the sermons of 406–407. Moreover, focusing first on the moral epistemology of *trin.* 1 will clarify what I mean by "trinitarian" theology, that is, not formulae about nature and persons but the complex of ideas, principles, and exegesis that shape how Augustine thinks about the Trinity.

In *trin.* 1, Augustine outlines the intellectual and moral approach to the Trinity that will govern much of his work in the rest of the treatise. Michel Barnes captures well the overarching epistemological concerns that govern *trin.* as a whole:

> The work is not an exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity *per se*: it is a study of the problematic of knowing God who is Trinity. In *On the Trinity* Augustine is writing on trinitarian hermeneutics or epistemology. His concern is, therefore, with all the types and cases of revelation and our specific capacities for being revealed

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10. For the dating of the initial books of *trin.* see Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 118–120. With some minor changes, Ayres follows A.-M. La Bonnardière, *Recherches de chronologie augustinienne* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1965), 83–87; and Pierre-Marie Hombert, *Nouvelles recherches de chronologie augustinienne* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 2000), 45–51.

to, ranging from scripture to scriptural episodes of divine revela-
tion (the theophanies, the incarnation), to signs, to doctrines, to the
image and likeness of God (the human mind), to the perfect 'form'
of God (the Word) as wisdom and knowledge, and to the necessity
of faith and purity for the mind to advance in any understanding of
the Trinity.[11]

The reader finds this epistemological concern already front and center in
trin. 1. This same understanding of faith and purity, particularly as they are
manifest in humility, will undergird Augustine's anti-Donatist preaching
on the church.

Though I will say more about *trin.* 1 in the next chapter, here I focus
on Augustine's use of two scripture passages: Philippians 2:6–7[12] and
Matthew 5:8.[13] Augustine introduces Philippians 2:6–7 in *trin.* 1 to under-
cut heretical readings of texts that would suggest Christ's inferiority to the
Father. Augustine explains that

the rule for solving this question throughout all of the holy scrip-
tures is brought forth to us in a chapter of the Apostle Paul's epistle,
where this distinction is commended in a more evident way. For
he says, "Who, though he was in the form of God, thought it not
robbery to be equal to God, but emptied himself taking the form of

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11. Michel Barnes, "Latin Trinitarian Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity*,
ed. Peter C. Phan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 78.

12. Lewis Ayres describes Phil 2:6–7 as Augustine's Panzer, a scriptural tool with the "abil-
ity to drive all before it" (*Augustine and the Trinity*, 146). Ayres's use of the term is itself
a play on Alois Grillmeier's use in *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche. Band 1. Von
der Apostolischen Zeit bis zum Konzil von Chalcedon (451)* (Freiburg: Herder, 1979), viii. See
also Albert Verwilghen, *Christologie et spiritualité selon saint Augustin: l'hymn aux Philippiens*
(Paris: Beauchesne, 1985). For the more general concern in pro-Nicene authors to account
for the suffering of Christ, see Gerard Remy, "Passivités du Christ, leur interprétation chez
Grégoire de Nazianze et Augustin d'Hippone," in *La christologie et la Trinité chez les Pères*, ed.
Marie-Anne Vannier (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2013), 119–153.

13. Michel Barnes helpfully casts Augustine's reading of Matt 5:8 in *trin.* 1 in the context
of Homoian claims that the Son is the visible (and therefore subordinate) member of the
Trinity. For Barnes, Matt 5:8, when read in conjunction with Phil 2:5–6 and 1 Cor 15:24–28,
allows Augustine to articulate how faith in the incarnation of Christ purifies the heart and
mind of the believer in preparation for the vision of God. Thus Augustine can maintain
the revelatory character of the incarnation without granting the Homoian position that
Christ's divinity is visible and therefore subordinate to the Father. See Barnes, "The Visible
Christ and the Invisible Trinity: Mt 5:8 in Augustine's Trinitarian Theology of 400," *Modern
Theology* 19, no. 3 (2003): 329–355.

a slave, being made in the likeness of man, and in habit found as a man."[14]

This rule of interpretation requires that the reader of scripture recognize that Christ, due to the incarnation, is spoken of according to both the *forma dei* and the *forma serui*. This double predication undercuts subordinationist claims by affirming that "the form of a slave was taken in such a way that the form of God was not lost."[15] Appropriate reading of scripture, then, holds together these two forms of predication, preventing one from negating the other.

Similar to this use of Philippians 2:6–7 is Augustine's use of the prologue to the Gospel of John. In the seemingly contradicting statements of John 1:1–3 and John 1:14, Augustine finds another affirmation that the Word who was "made flesh and dwelt among us" is the same Word who was in the beginning with God and "was God."[16] As with Philippians 2:6–7, the juxtaposition of these two passages from John's prologue undercuts those who would deny the true divinity of Christ on account of his earthly physical existence. Philippians 2:6–7, then, provides a programmatic rule for understanding the relationship between John 1:14 and John 1:1–3, that is, the incarnate Christ and the eternal Christ. The former is necessarily less than the Father, but only according to the *forma serui*. This same one is "equal to God the Father *by nature*."[17]

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14. *trin.* 1.7.14. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

15. *trin.* 1.7.14. As Gioia notes, "This rule, however, plays a role in the first book [of *trin.*] only. In fact, Augustine becomes increasingly aware that the relation between the humanity and the divinity in Christ is more than a simple question of the attribution of his actions to each of his two natures. A far more sophisticated notion of the union of the Son of God with human nature is required to account for the daring assertions of 'crucified God' (*deus crucifixus*) and the 'humility of God' (*humilitas dei*)" (*Theological Epistemology*, 26). The presence of this way of reading Phil 2:6–7 in our sermon series, then, further highlights the appropriateness of reading those sermons in the context of *trin.* 1. Moreover, as I will argue in Chapter 2, our sermon series also evinces a maturation of Augustine's Christological thought as he articulates the way in which the church is united to the complex identity of Christ. M.-F. Berrouard argues that Augustine's maturing Christology accounts for the later dating of *Io. ev. tr.* 20–22 to well after *Io. ev. tr.* 1–19. Though Berrouard's dating of the latter to 414 is still too late to account for the Donatist emphasis in *Io. ev. tr.* 1–16, his analysis helps situate those sermons in the context of the initial books of *trin.* See Berrouard, introduction to *Homélies sur l'Evangile de saint Jean XVII–XXXIII*, BA 72 (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1977). For further analysis of Berrouard's argument, see Gioia, *Theological Epistemology*, 27 n. 14.

16. *trin.* 1.6.9.

17. *trin.* 1.7.14 (my emphasis).

With Philippians 2:6–7, Augustine emphasizes that Christ in *forma serui* does not lose the *forma dei*, that is, his natural equality with the Father, such that he can be spoken of, even by himself, according to both forms. But there is also an implicit distinction at the heart of this rule. Philippians 2:6–7, along with the Johannine prologue, highlights the fact that speech about Christ is different, depending on whether it refers to the *forma dei* or the *forma serui*. This is the heart of the epistemological problem of *trin*. 1. By denying the Homoian claim that Christ is the visible (and therefore subordinate) member of the Trinity, Augustine introduces a gap between knowledge of the flesh of Christ and knowledge of the divinity of Christ, which is knowledge of the Trinity itself.[18]

This gap between knowledge of the incarnate Christ and knowledge of his divinity is a consequence of the epistemological gap between the material and the spiritual. The failure of the heretics to recognize Christ's equality with the Father and his true divinity is a failure to distinguish rightly between the material and spiritual truths of scripture. By confusing texts that speak according to the *forma serui* with those that speak according to the *forma dei*, they have come to mistaken beliefs about the eternal nature of the Son. The exegetical rule of Philippians 2:6–7 trains readers of scripture to distinguish the material from the spiritual so that they might not import material ways of thinking into their contemplation and speech about the divine Trinity.

This ability to distinguish between the material and the spiritual brings me to Matthew 5:8: "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God." Philippians 2:6–7 highlighted the intellectual disposition necessary for approaching Christ's divinity and, with it, the Trinity; Matthew 5:8 reveals the accompanying moral disposition. As with Philippians 2:6–7, this moral component turns upon a distinction between the material and the spiritual, but it also adds to the intellectual distinction a reformation of desire and a reorientation of love that allows one to value and seek what is higher, spiritual, and eternal. These two components, the intellectual and the affective, go together in

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18. "The incarnation does not bring salvation in such a way that allows knowledge (direct sight) to be the basis of our assent to propositions which are in fact true, and to which we must assent if we are to be both virtuous and saved. The most important fact about the identity of Jesus of Nazareth cannot be known, for it is not available to any kind of sight, material or noetic" (Barnes, "The Visible Christ," 343). Barnes's use of the term "knowledge" refers to a strict form of knowledge that requires firsthand sight of the known object.

Augustine's approach to the Trinity as the reformation of desire and the training of the mind are united.[19]

Augustine's use of Matthew 5:8 in *trin.* 1 highlights faith as the virtue whereby our hearts are purified and cleansed in order that we might come to see and know God. For example, Augustine joins Matthew 5:8 with Acts 15:9 to explain Philip's inability to see the Father by seeing Christ (John 14:8–9).

> [Christ] wished that [Philip] would live by faith before he would be able to see [God]. . . . Contemplation is surely the reward of faith, and for this reward our hearts are cleansed by faith, as it is written, "Cleansing their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:9). And that our hearts will be cleansed for that contemplation is proved in the best way in that sentence, "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God."[20]

Augustine is working with the distinction between faith and sight that separates the way we know God in this world from the way we will know God in the eschaton.[21] But faith here is not merely belief or trust that stands in for a knowledge that we do not yet have; faith is a mode of knowledge appropriate to life in this world, but it prepares us for the knowledge of "face to face" sight by purifying our hearts. Matthew 5:8, then, is connected to Augustine's epistemological use of Philippians 2:6–7 in that the purification of the heart by way of faith is what brings our minds from things material to things spiritual, from the temporal to the eternal, from the *forma serui* to the *forma dei*.

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19. For a recent discussion of the role of desire in trinitarian theology, see Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay On the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

20. *trin.* 1.8.17.

21. In *trin.* 1 Augustine does not yet deploy the famous distinction between *scientia* and *sapientia*. The "faith/sight" distinction bears the epistemological weight of this first book, but it does not function exactly the same as the later terms. Rist situates Augustine's epistemology within his rejection of Skepticism and his embrace of the Platonic distinction between *episteme* and *doxa*, knowledge and belief (see esp. *Augustine*, 42–60). For Augustine, however, both faith and sight are types of knowledge, even though the former is derivative and the latter is firsthand. This derivative knowledge of faith, though, is both legitimate and necessary because it is the only way someone in this life can come to the truth. See Augustine, *util. cred.* 8.20. On the *scientia/sapientia* distinction, see, *inter alia*, Lewis Ayres, "The Christological Context of Augustine's *de Trinitate* XIII: Toward Relocating Books VIII–XV," *AugStud* 29, no. 1 (1998): 111–139; Gioia, *Theological Epistemology*, 75–83; Robert Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 147–181; Rowan Williams, "*Sapientia* and the Trinity: Reflections on the *De trinitate*," *Augustiniana* 40 (1990): 317–332.

Thus the purification of the heart represents a moral reformation and reorientation. In his discussion of how the Son of Man will appear in the last judgment, Augustine distinguishes what the wicked will see from what the righteous will see:

> For since both the good and the wicked are going to see the judge of the living and the dead, there is no doubt that the wicked will be unable to see him except according to that form by which he is the Son of Man, but nevertheless in the glory in which he will judge, not in the humility in which he was judged. Moreover, there is no doubt that the impious will not see that form of God in which he is equal to the Father. For they are not clean of heart, and, "Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God."[22]

Matthew 5:8 thus includes an implicit correlation: if the clean of heart will see God, then the unclean of heart will not see God. Here Augustine contrasts that purity of heart to the wickedness of those who will be judged by Christ. It is their wickedness that prevents them from seeing the Son of Man in *forma dei*.[23] Therefore the purification of the heart that is brought about by faith entails a type of moral growth as well.

Augustine further connects this purity of the heart with the reorientation of our love toward God. In discussing the *visio Dei*, he again cites Matthew 5:8 and alludes to "any other things that have been said about this vision, which he will find scattered throughout all scripture, who searches with the eyes of love—that vision alone is our highest good, in order to gain which we are commanded to do whatever we do rightly."[24] The "eyes of love" suggest the work of purification upon the heart as faith reorients our desire toward "our highest good" and, by implication, away from the inferior goods of this world. The image of the "eyes" brings us back to Augustine's distinction between faith and sight. In order to see properly, which is to know properly, we must see with love.

There is thus a connection between the intellectual approach of Philippians 2:6–7 and the moral approach of Matthew 5:8.[25] The exegetical

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22. *trin.* 1.12.28.

23. See Barnes, "The Visible Christ," 334.

24. *trin.* 1.12.31.

25. Augustine uses Phil 2:6–7 and Matt 5:8 in much the same way in our sermon series at *ep. Io.* 4.5, 9.9.

rule trains the mind to distinguish between material and spiritual predication of Christ according to the *forma serui* and the *forma dei*. Matthew 5:8 adds a moral component to our Christian growth that will allow us to come to see Christ in *forma dei*, in contrast to the wicked, who will only see the *forma serui*. Such beatific sight requires the cultivation of "the eyes of love" through which we might properly see God. Thus the epistemological gap created by distinguishing between the material and the spiritual is overcome, at least in part, by the "cleansing of the heart" that faith effects.

In *trin.* 1, then, "faith," as Michel Barnes puts it, "marries an epistemology with a moral anthropology."[26] To come to contemplation of the Trinity, one must learn to distinguish the material and the spiritual, particularly as represented in the two *formae* of Christ, and must have one's love reoriented toward the spiritual, particularly the beatific vision of God, our supreme good. This same dynamic is present, in an even more pronounced way, in our sermon series, to which I now turn.

The Moral Epistemology of Our Sermon Series

In the opening book of *trin.*, Augustine develops a theory of how we advance in knowledge of God through the reformation of our desire in a way that emphasizes the ability to distinguish between the spiritual and the material. This same moral epistemology, so integral to Augustine's trinitarian theology, is at work in our sermon series. Here, though, Augustine adapts the moral epistemology of *trin.* to his preaching on both the Trinity (often by way of Christ[27]) and the church. Augustine does not merely describe this approach; rather, he teaches it to his audience, often leading the congregation in a series of exercises designed to reorient their thoughts and desires

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26. Barnes, "The Visible Christ," 342. Barnes goes on to say that faith not only marries these two, but that it "grounds them both in Christology." I will take up this aspect of Augustine's moral epistemology in the next chapter as I demonstrate that this reformation of knowledge and desire that brings us to sight of God is effected in and through the body of Christ.

27. I will describe Augustine's Christological discourse as inherently trinitarian because the divinity of Christ is always understood as his equality to the Father whose Son and Word he is. A neat distinction between trinitarian theology and Christology is not possible in Augustine, given his pro-Nicene commitments. That the Spirit may not be explicitly included in many of these conversations does not make them any less trinitarian. See Augustine's own discussion of this point at *Io. ev. tr.* 9.7–8. That said, these first two chapters are more "Christological" in their emphasis, whereas Chapter 3 is more pneumatological, and Chapter 4 highlights the common and inseparable operations of the whole Trinity in the work of baptism.

from the material to the spiritual, from the temporal to the eternal, and from the created to the Creator. This mode of preaching demonstrates the continuity between his thought on the Trinity and his anti-Donatist polemic about the church. Augustine unites both topics within a single discourse founded on the healing of intellect and desire that defines the Christian life and for which the church is the primary vehicle.

To highlight this connection, I will alternate between unpacking Augustine's Christological or trinitarian preaching and explicating his anti-Donatist preaching on the church. In this way I will move through each component of the moral epistemology. First, I will discuss the intellectual aspect, which is founded upon distinguishing between material and spiritual realities. Second, I will show how this intellectual training is also connected to a moral aspect, as the Christian learns to desire the spiritual over the material and cultivates love of the true good that is God. As in *trin.* 1, reorientation of desire is the *sine qua non* for intellectual progress, both toward the blessed vision of the Trinity and toward participation in the true church triumphant.[28]

Training the Mind

Though Augustine's moral epistemology as directed toward Christ and the Trinity is present throughout these sermons, the first tractate on the Gospel of John offers a rich example of how he deploys this theme throughout the series.[29] This sermon tackles the first five verses of John 1 and the associated question of how we come to know the Word who

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28. For Augustine's understanding of the distinction and relationship between the church militant, that is, the church as it exists in this world, and the church triumphant, that is, the church as it exists in glory, see the following two studies, which ought to be read as complementary: Émilien Lamirande, *L'Eglise céleste selon saint Augustin* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1963); and Pasquale Borgomeo, *L'Eglise de ces temps dans la predication de saint Augustin* (Paries: Études Augustiniennes, 1972). Both Borgomeo and Lamirande emphasize that there is no clear distinction between the earthly church and the heavenly church, as the former already shares in the life of the latter. I agree with their emphasis, and when I speak of such a distinction below, it ought not be read as a negation of that relationship.

29. The close proximity of *trin.* 1 and these sermons in both date and argument suggests that we might read the latter as a popularization of the former. John Cavidini, "Simplifying Augustine," in *Educating People of Faith: Exploring the History of Jewish and Christian Communities*, ed. John van Engen (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 63–84, makes a similar argument about the relationship between *trin.* and Augustine's sermons. While I think the basic point Cavadini is making about the relationship is true, I do not want to characterize it as "simplifying." Some of the psychagogic exercises that Augustine deploys

is God.[30] To emphasize this epistemological difficulty, Augustine opens the sermon with an allusion to 1 Corinthians 2:14, which was read that day as part of the liturgy.[31] Augustine glosses Paul's declaration that "a natural human does not grasp what pertains to the spirit of God" as indicating the many who "still think according to the flesh, who are not yet able to raise themselves to a spiritual understanding."[32] This suggests to Augustine that preaching on John 1:1 might be pointless since the spiritual truth of the eternal Word's divinity cannot be grasped by the material thoughts of human minds. As in *trin.* 1, this epistemological concern governs the rest of the sermon.

Augustine's first step in preaching on this seemingly unapproachable text is to elucidate the role of John in composing such lofty words. Augustine describes John as a mountain because of the heights to which his mind was raised by God's inspiration. In his sermon on Psalm 120, preached only a few days earlier, Augustine describes mountains as those who are immediately enlightened by the light of Wisdom and reflect that light to others.[33] Continuing with this same idea, Augustine uses Psalm 71:3—"May the mountains receive peace for your people and the hills justice"—to elaborate on the activity of such a mountain. Augustine explains that "mountains are very high souls; hills are very small souls. But for that reason the mountains receive peace, so that the hills might receive justice. What is the justice that the hills receive? Faith, because 'the just person lives by faith' (Rom 1:17)."[34] John's role as an evangelist, then, is to communicate what he was shown through divine inspiration; this transmission leads to faith as the form of knowledge appropriate to this life for those who do not have sight of eternal truths. This faith is a derivative form

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in these sermons are quite complex. Augustine is inviting his audience into that deeper way of thinking (and of loving), not dumbing down anything. Therefore, he is indeed "popularizing" the theology of *trin.* 1 by adapting it to the psychagogic mode of preaching, but not in any sense that sees a "popular" version of the theology as less sophisticated than the original "elite" version.

30. On the epistemological concerns in *Io. ev. tr.* 1 and 2, see Paul van Geest, "St. Augustine on God's Incomprehensibility, Incarnation, and the Authority of St. John," *SP* 70 (2013): 117–131, which ventures much further into modern questions of epistemology and apophaticism than I will.

31. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.1: *intuens quod modo audiuimus ex lectione apostolica.*

32. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.1.

33. *en. Ps.* 120.4.

34. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.2.

of knowledge, but it is knowledge nonetheless. The mountains "transfer to the small souls what the small souls are able to grasp."[35] This mediation of faith helps to bridge the epistemological gap between the material knowledge of this world and the spiritual truth of the Word's eternal divinity. Though material minds cannot truly grasp the truth of John 1:1, they can receive it as faith.

But as I suggested in my discussion of *trin.* 1, this faith is not merely a substitution for sight; rather, faith is preparation for sight because our minds are trained and our hearts are purified through the virtue of faith. This is why Augustine spends a good portion of the sermon training his audience in how to move from material to spiritual modes of thinking. He cultivates this work of faith within them through his preaching. He begins this training by pointing to the mountain of John as an exemplar of this movement:

> What was this mountain like? How high was it? It had climbed beyond all the peaks of the earth, climbed beyond all the fields of the air, climbed beyond the heights of the stars, climbed beyond all the choirs and legions of angels. For unless he climbed beyond all these created things, he would not have come to the one "through whom all things were made" (John 1:3).[36]

Augustine describes John's divine inspiration, which allowed him to declare the mysteries of John 1:1–3, in terms of an intellectual ascent. Instead of the categories of "material" and "spiritual," though, Augustine uses the language of "created" and, by implication, "uncreated." This ought to be read as a parallel movement, given his emphasis on the material mind's inability to know the spiritual reality of the Word's divinity. This ascent to the uncreated requires John to ascend above all things created, much as the spiritual mind transcends the material.[37]

After some more reflections on the character of John as mountain, Augustine turns from John to his audience, encouraging them to turn their minds and hearts upward to follow John's inspired ascent. To do so,

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35. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.2.

36. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.5.

37. See my discussion of these pairings above, p. 22. Although material and spiritual realities both exist within the created world, and therefore do not exactly coincide with the created/Creator distinction, Augustine often treats them as analogically parallel. Thus, moving from the material to the spiritual is sometimes preparation for and sometimes synonymous with moving from the created to the Creator.

Augustine offers an exercise to help them move from material to spiritual modes of thinking. He begins with a meditation on the nature of our words and the eternality of the Word. Augustine moves from the external and temporal utterances of our speech to the internal word that is the lasting understanding signified by the ephemeral sound.[38] This, Augustine says, is "like a plan born in your mind, such that your mind may give birth to a plan, which is like the offspring of your mind, like the son of your heart."[39] Using this idea of the internal word producing the external word, Augustine demonstrates how one should think of creation in relationship to the Word who is "the plan of God." Recounting the beauty of the created world, Augustine directs the minds of his audience beyond that world: "Consider what the Word must be like through whom [this world] was made. . . . Through the Word all things were made. From this consideration, think what the Word is like."[40] Augustine ends this exercise by summarizing what the audience is to learn about the Word:

> When you hear "the Word," do not form the idea of something cheap and common, and do not infer that it is like the words you hear every day. . . . And when you hear, "In the beginning was the Word," do not value it as something cheap and common such as you are accustomed to thinking of whenever you hear human words. Listen to what you ought to think: "And the Word was God."[41]

This ascent from the material world toward the eternal reality of the Word's divinity does not lead to direct knowledge of the Word; rather, it is a process of training that allows the Christian to purge material ways of thinking that would lead to improper thoughts about God and thus inhibit faith.

This exercise is an operation of the faith that Augustine says John the evangelist communicates to the church. Having led his audience from the external word to the internal plan, and from the created world to the uncreated Word, Augustine turns to the "Arians," challenging them to "approach and say that the Word of God was made."[42] Such a heretical

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38. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.8.

39. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.9.

40. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.9.

41. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.10.

42. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.11. "Arians" is the term Augustine uses in this passage.

statement would result from confusion between the created and the uncreated, a symptom of a mind that is still oriented to the material and changeable world. The cure for this, Augustine says, is to "believe the evangelist" when he declares that the Word is the one through whom the entire changeable world was made and thus is himself beyond that world.[43] Thus, the faith that Augustine says the mountain of John transmits to the hills of the church begins with trust in the Gospel, but that same faith is cultivated by the type of intellectual exercise and growth that trains Christians to think in terms beyond the material and the created, not that they might attain direct knowledge of God in this life, but that they might approach it and be prepared for it through this renewing of the mind.

This exercise in training the mind to distinguish between the material and the spiritual also lies at the heart of Augustine's preaching on the church in these sermons. To examine this dynamic, I turn to the image of Jerusalem. Augustine interprets the Jerusalem to which the psalmist climbs in the Psalms of Ascent as indicative of the eternal reality to which Christians are ascending and from which they are on sojourn in this life.[44] This Jerusalem is, in short, heaven, but Augustine makes clear that this heavenly city is connected to our experience of the church.

The earthly church, in its purest sense, is a participation in that heavenly city. We participate in that city through the cultivation of the same knowledge and love that Augustine describes as leading to the vision of God. For instance, in his exposition of Psalm 131, Augustine clarifies what

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43. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.11.

44. Stanislaus J. Grabowski, *The Church: An Introduction to the Theology of St. Augustine* (London: Herder, 1957), 545–548, traces Augustine's understanding of the heavenly Jerusalem back to Tertullian (*cor.* 13) and Tyconius. Tyconius is often a source for Augustine's ecclesiological exegesis, but here I think Grabowski overemphasizes him. Jerusalem is a multivalent image in Tyconius, and it does not neatly map onto Augustine's use of it. There are notable approximations, such as Tyconius's discussion of the "bipartite Jerusalem," one side of which is the eternal, heavenly Jerusalem. But Augustine's use in these sermons is much closer to the earthly/heavenly distinction that one finds in Ambrose, e.g., *Luc.* 7.71, 7.103, et alia. More recently, Michael Fiedrowicz, *Psalmus Vox Totius Christi: Studien zu Augustins* Enarrationes in Psalmos (Freiburg: Herder, 1997), 226–229, suggests Plotinus as the background for Augustine's preaching on ascent to Jerusalem in the *en. Ps.* Although the "books of the Platonists" certainly are evident in Augustine's understanding of the ascent from the material to the spiritual, it is likely that Augustine's Platonism is here mediated through the Christian version of Ambrose. For a study of Augustine's "Zionsterminologie," see Fiedrowicz, *Psalmus Vox*, 282–284.

the term "tabernacle" means. In doing so, he emphasizes the connection between the eternal Jerusalem and the earthly church:

> Although sometimes God's house is called God's tabernacle, and in other texts God's tabernacle is called God's house, nevertheless, one ought to distinguish between the two, dearest brothers. "Tabernacle" means the church in this age. "House," however, means the church of the heavenly Jerusalem to which we are traveling. For a tabernacle is for soldiers and fighters. For soldiers have tabernacles when they are on campaign and ready for battle. Because they dwell in tabernacles, soldiers are called *contubernales*. Therefore, as long as we have enemies with whom we must fight, we make a tabernacle for God. When, however, the time of fighting has passed and when that peace has come which passes all understanding (Phil 4:7)... when that peace comes, that homeland will be the house. There no adversary will attack, so there is no need to call it a tabernacle.[45]

The heavenly Jerusalem is the church inasmuch as the church is already perfected in glory. The earthly church has a teleological identity tied to this heavenly Jerusalem because it is the goal that defines the sojourning life of the church militant. Proper understanding of the earthly church requires recognizing its orientation to this heavenly Jerusalem. The image of the soldiers on campaign suggests the hope and promise of returning home, where home is that eternal Jerusalem. The soldier's life of tent-dwelling is a temporary existence that finds its meaning in the homeland from which he is temporarily estranged.

Augustine elaborates on this connection between the heavenly Jerusalem and the earthly church later in the same sermon: "Zion is the church and Zion is also the heavenly Jerusalem toward whose peace we are running. And Zion is on pilgrimage not in the angels but in us. And the better part of Jerusalem awaits the part which is yet to return."[46] Again Augustine connects the life of the earthly church to its goal in the heavenly Jerusalem. Here he describes the earthly church as one part of a larger reality from which it is temporarily severed. But the image of the earthly

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45. *en. Ps.* 131.10. For more on the image of the tabernacle, see Émilien Lamirande, *L'Eglise celeste*, 166–177; and Ratzinger, *Volk und Haus Gottes* (St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1954/1992), 237–240.

46. *en. Ps.* 131.21.

church "running" toward the peace of the heavenly Jerusalem suggests the intentional disposition of the sojourner who is not so much wandering aimlessly as traveling with a goal, a desire directed toward her home.[47]

Thus Augustine's preaching on the heavenly Jerusalem establishes the church's identity in the life of that spiritual reality. The way in which Augustine directs his audience to think about that Jerusalem, then, ought to be seen as training in how to think of the church as well. As with Christ and the Trinity, there is both an intellectual and a moral component, and both of these are built upon a distinction between the material and the spiritual.

Just as Augustine trains his audience to think of the divinity of Christ and the Trinity in a way that distinguishes between the spiritual and the material, so he trains them to think about the eternal Jerusalem of the perfected church in contrast to the earthly Jerusalem and earthly church. This is a theme throughout his preaching on the Psalms of Ascent, where Augustine directs the minds of the congregation to the Jerusalem to which they are ascending. In his exposition of Psalm 121, he contrasts the heavenly Jerusalem with the earthly one. Here the earthly Jerusalem is not the earthly church but the actual city:

> "Our feet were standing in the forecourts of Jerusalem." To what Jerusalem does this statement belong? For we often speak of a Jerusalem, but that Jerusalem is a shadow of the other one. . . . [Therefore] we ought not understand the real Jerusalem in a carnal manner.[48]

Here the physical, earthly city named Jerusalem is the material foil to the spiritual Jerusalem and, as with the earthly church, the spiritual Jerusalem is the more "real" of the two. The historical, earthly city, then, has the same sort of relationship with the spiritual Jerusalem as the church does in the passages cited earlier. In training his audience to look beyond the material city of Jerusalem, Augustine also trains them to look beyond the terrestrial church toward the spiritual reality that is the basis for its identity.

In this same vein, Augustine interprets the description of Jerusalem "being built like a city" (Ps 121:3). This cannot mean the earthly

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47. On this desire for the heavenly *patria*, see Lamirande, *L'Eglise celeste*, 174–181.

48. *en. Ps.* 121.3, 5.

Jerusalem, since it had already been built by the time of David, the psalmist. Rather, Augustine argues, the verse refers to the spiritual Jerusalem. To exercise his audience's minds, Augustine turns their attention to the physical building of the church around them: "You see this wide basilica that bodies built. Because bodies built it, they placed the foundation below. We, however, are being built spiritually, so our foundation has been placed on high."[49] Here Augustine makes more explicit how the distinction between the earthly city of Jerusalem and the heavenly city relates to his understanding of the church. The spiritual Jerusalem "consists of holy persons, built up like living stones."[50] And this foundation is not the physical foundations of the basilica but heaven itself. Thus the intellectual habit of ascending to the spiritual from the material reorients one's thinking about the church from the material existence to the spiritual reality in which it is, so to speak, grounded.

Reforming Desire

Augustine has the same intellectual approach to both the Trinity and the church in these sermons, but this is only the first part of his moral epistemology. There is also, as in *trin.* 1, a moral component. As he says in his second sermon on 1 John, "If we know, let us love."[51] For both the Trinity/ Christ and the church, progress in knowledge requires an accompanying reorientation of desire.[52]

To illustrate this with regard to Christ and the Trinity, I return to *Io. ev. tr.* 1. Augustine concludes this sermon with a citation of Matthew 5:8 in much the same way he used that verse in *trin.* 1. He cautions that "foolish hearts are not yet able to grasp this light, because they are weighed down

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49. *en. Ps.* 121.4.

50. *en. Ps.* 121.4.

51. *ep. Io.* 2.7.

52. I avoid the use of the term "will" here so as to evade the associated baggage of the term and its place in Augustine's psychology. What I describe here as the reformation of desire and reorientation of our love is obviously connected to Augustine's notion of *voluntas*, but that term is not central to his preaching in these sermons. Therefore, though this section certainly relates to his theology of the will, there is no need to enter into that deeper conversation for the purposes of this argument. For a recent reconsideration of Augustine's consistency in speaking of the will in his early works, see Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 198–226.

by their sins so that they cannot see the light."[53] This, Augustine says, is the meaning of the beatitude that promises sight of God to the pure of heart. He exhorts his audience to "clean that by which one is able to see God,"[54] applying a moral gloss to his epistemological understanding of sight. Cleansing what allows us to see cannot simply be about sharpening the mind; Augustine specifies sin as that which prevents the foolish heart from seeing the light of God. By concluding the sermon in this way, Augustine highlights the moral aspect of his epistemology, again paralleling the dynamic present in *trin.* 1.

Augustine makes a similar move at the end of *Io. ev. tr.* 3, preached only two weeks later. Here, though, he emphasizes that love is the purification of the heart that allows us to see God. In *Io. ev. tr.* 3.15–18, Augustine leads his audience through another exercise on how to think of God. In this case, he examines the significance of identifying the Son as the "image" of God. As in *trin.* 1, Augustine wants to refute Homoian claims that the Son is, by nature, the visible member of the Trinity. Augustine's argument again turns on a distinction between material and spiritual, created and uncreated. The Homoians' belief in the visibility of the Son, Augustine claims, comes from a failure to make a distinction between these types of realities. As he concludes the sermon, though, Augustine turns from the intellectual to the moral, connecting the promise that we will see God to our desire to do so. To illustrate the promise, he explicates Psalm 26:4, in which the psalmist desires to "dwell in the house of the Lord" and "gaze upon the delight of the Lord." Citing this verse sparks a joyful reaction from Augustine's audience:

> My brothers, why do you cheer? Why do you celebrate? Why do you show such love, if not because you have a spark of this charity? What do you desire? I beseech you. Can it be seen with the eyes? Can it be touched? Is it a type of beauty that delights the eyes? . . . You see, across the way, a hunched old man, leaning on a walking

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53. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.19. Gioia uses a slightly earlier passage, *Io. ev. tr.* 1.17, to illustrate that "understanding is a matter of love, *nutriat cor*" (*The Theological Epistemology*, 263). Gioia's focus throughout his study is on our love and understanding of the Trinity. He is right in his reading of *Io. ev. tr.* 1, and I think it is apparent in other Christological/trinitarian passages in these sermons and ought to be applied also to the ecclesiological, anti-Donatist sermons of the same series.

54. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.19. See also *ep. Io.* 5.7, 6.9–12, 7.10, 8.12, 9.10.

stick, hardly able to move, with deep wrinkles all over him. What do you see here that delights the eyes? You hear that he is a just man. You love him, and you embrace him. . . . Love such things, sigh for such a kingdom, and desire such a homeland if you wish to come to that with which the Lord came: grace and truth. If, however, you lust for bodily rewards from God, you are still under the law. . . . Do not love God in order to get a reward; let God be your reward.[55]

Augustine shows here, even more clearly than in *Io. ev. tr.* 1, the moral component of his epistemology. The purification of the heart entails an intellectual maturation and ascent from the material to the spiritual, but it also requires a comparable reorientation of one's desire. To come to the vision and enjoyment of God, one must learn not only to think spiritually but to love spiritually. In the created world, this means loving the beauty of a person's justice rather than his visible appearance. This type of love is a preparation for the true beauty that is our true good.[56] The love of God is cultivated in the same manner as intellectual contemplation of God, through a process of purification that leads the eyes of the heart from the material to the spiritual and from the created to the uncreated.

This reorientation of desire is also the accompanying moral component of Augustine's ecclesiological epistemology. Augustine illustrates this in *en. Ps.* 121, the sermon I cited earlier as an example of his training in how to distinguish intellectually between the material and spiritual Jerusalems. Later in that same sermon, he exhorts his audience, "Let such thoughts of this earthly Jerusalem be absent from one who loves, who burns, who wishes to come to that Jerusalem which is our mother, which the apostle calls our 'everlasting home in heaven' (2 Cor 5:1)."[57] Thus this exercise in distinguishing the material from the spiritual is not only an intellectual endeavor but a moral one as well. Love and longing for that heavenly Jerusalem are cultivated alongside this intellectual habit.

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55. *Io. ev. tr.* 3.21.

56. Beauty plays a large role in Augustine's early theology as that which we wish to see in the face-to-face vision of God, that which we have lost in our fall, and that by which our minds and desires are reformed and reoriented toward the good. These emphases suggest the influence of the "books of the Platonists," particularly Plotinus, *Enn.* 1.6. See, for instance, *ver. rel.* 56; *conf.* 4.13.20, 7.17.23. In secondary literature, see Carol Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of Saint Augustine* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), especially her discussion of "Faith, Hope, and Love," 239–260.

57. *en. Ps.* 121.3.

In fact, Augustine opens this same sermon with a summary of how love, like the mind, recognizes this same distinction between the material and the spiritual:

> Just as impure love inflames the soul, and draws it toward earthly things that are desirable but are bound to die, and casts it down into the depths; so holy love raises the soul to heavenly things, and causes the soul to burn for eternal things, and stirs the soul toward that which will neither pass away nor die, and lifts it from the depths of hell to heaven.[58]

This is the heart of what I have called Augustine's moral epistemology. The intellectual exercises depicted in the previous passages come to fruition only if they are coupled with the cultivation of proper love. The Christian life is a reorientation of both our minds and our desires so that we might come to know what we desire and love what we know.

Augustine further clarifies this moral epistemology as it relates to the distinction between material and spiritual goods in his exposition of Psalm 127:8, "May the Lord bless you from Zion, and may you see the good things that belong to Jerusalem." Augustine challenges his audience to turn away from earthly notions of "blessing" and "good things" and to desire the true good, that is, the peace that the eternal Jerusalem has in God's eternal presence.[59] This is "the good thing that kindles our desire, the thing for which we sigh, the thing that inflames us," but in order to enjoy it we must first "fight our bad desires (*concupiscentiis*) . . . the carnal urges and disturbances."[60] Thus the love that raises the soul to eternal realities—particularly to the eternal Jerusalem that orients the life of the earthly church—is also cultivated by the same distinction between material and spiritual natures that the mind learns in the exercise of faith. This is the same relationship between thought and desire that Augustine evinces in his preaching on Christ and the Trinity in these sermons.

The above texts from *en. Ps.* 121 and 127 illustrate the way in which Augustine's preaching on the church and the heavenly Jerusalem entails a moral epistemology that distinguishes between the material and the

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58. *en. Ps.* 121.1.

59. *en. Ps.* 127.15.

60. *en. Ps.* 127.16.

spiritual, both intellectually and morally, as one's mind and desire are reoriented toward the spiritual reality. Moreover, because previous texts have established that this heavenly Jerusalem is the spiritual reality in which the earthly, sojourning church participates and finds its identity, these exercises in intellectual and moral ascent represent the proper disposition with which one ought to approach the church, just as it is the proper disposition for approaching the Trinity in previous sections. Just as one comes to know and love the Trinity through the purification of the heart by faith that leads to the vision of God, so one comes to participate in the true reality of the church, that is, the heavenly Jerusalem, through the cultivation of this same moral epistemology.

Augustine elucidates the anti-Donatist implications of this reformation of desire in the Johannine tractates of our sermon series. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.8 describes "the good people in the church" as those "who share in the fortune of that city, Jerusalem."[61] The context for this remark is an anti-Donatist articulation of baptism in which good people can be baptized by wicked and wicked by good, such that the merits of the individual do not depend upon the merits of another.[62] Thus Augustine depicts diversity in the mixed earthly institution of the church. This diversity, though, does not impinge upon the spiritual reality in which the earthly church participates because not everyone in the earthly church shares in the heavenly Jerusalem. Augustine cites 2 Timothy 2:19, "the Lord knows who are his own," to demonstrate the way in which only the "good people in the church" participate in that heavenly Jerusalem.

Io. ev. tr. 11.8 also references Jerusalem in the context of an anti-Donatist argument about baptism. Here Augustine takes the figures of the patriarchs and their progeny to demonstrate that good and bad persons can each "give birth" to good or bad persons. This begetting symbolizes baptism in which both good and bad issue from both good and bad baptizers, irrespectively. Following Paul's interpretation of Genesis 21 at Galatians 4, Augustine argues that Isaac and Jacob represent, respectively, the old and new covenants. "To the old covenant belong the lovers of temporal things, the lovers of the world. To the new covenant belong the lovers of eternal life. For this reason, that Jerusalem on earth was the shadow of the heavenly

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61. See Grabowski, *The Church*, 547–548.

62. Augustine uses the word *meritum* here, but one ought not load later scholastic baggage on his use of the term. There seems to be no technical significance to the word beyond the benefits of salvation that one person receives and another does not.

Jerusalem, the mother of us all."[63] To be part of the new covenant, a member of the heavenly Jerusalem, is to be a lover of eternal life. The contrast between the two loves highlights the way in which this understanding of participation in the true Jerusalem turns upon Augustine's moral epistemology.

This is the ecclesial version of Matthew 5:8. The purification of the heart, including the cultivation of proper love, will allow one to see God in the eschaton and to approach contemplation of God in this life. Likewise, though the church of this world is *permixtum*, those within it who participate in the true reality come to it through the same process of intellectual and moral reformation that leads to sight of God. This suggests that these two discourses on the Trinity and the church are not quite as discrete at they might seem, especially within Augustine's preaching as he works to cultivate this type of reformation of knowledge and love.

The Primary Disposition of Humility

Augustine's approach to both the Trinity and the church entails a common moral epistemology that turns upon the distinction between the material and the spiritual. Both require the reorientation of one's thought and desire. To deepen our appreciation of this connection between the Trinity and the church, I now want to examine the primary disposition for both theological discourses: humility.[64] This will add three key elements to my argument. First, the anti-Donatist aspect of Augustine's ecclesiology becomes most apparent in his condemnation of their lack of humility, thus demonstrating the way in which he brings his moral epistemology to bear upon his ecclesiology in a specifically polemical manner. Second, the way Augustine discusses humility with respect to both God and the

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63. *Io. ev. tr.* 11.8.

64. By the term "disposition," I mean the orientation of one's thought and desire that is the manifestation of virtue. Because of this I will use "disposition" and "virtue" as virtual synonyms. Augustine himself defines virtue as *ordo amoris*, the ordering of love (*civ. Dei.* 15.22), as well as "perfect reason" (*div. qu.* 30). Thus virtue has both an intellectual and affective or moral component. Virtue as disposition, then, signifies the condition of the human soul whereby love and thought are properly oriented so that one might think and desire as one ought. The virtue of humility is most properly described as a disposition because it signifies the proper perspective of one's self before God that is the necessary precondition for further intellectual and moral growth. For a brief but thorough summary of virtue in Augustine, see George Lavere, "Virtue," in *ATTA*, 871–874. For more detailed analysis, see Robert Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society*, esp. his discussion of Christ's role in the mediation of virtue at 72–114; Wetzel, *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue*, esp. 45–111; and Rist, *Augustine*, 168–173.

church suggests that the church is the primary vehicle for the reformation of thought and desire. This moves my argument beyond showing a common theological language between Trinity and the church to showing how the two topics are more substantially related in Augustine's thought. Third, Augustine's description of humility, in both his trinitarian and his ecclesiological discussions, has a Christological dimension. This suggests a Christological connection between the life of the church and our ascent to God. This will set up my next chapter, where I explore the pro-Nicene principles that guide Augustine's theology of the church as the body of Christ to whom we are united and in whom we ascend to God.

Regarding God, humility allows us to move from Christ's flesh to his divinity as our pride is healed by Christ's own humility. Regarding the church, humility allows us to have the proper orientation toward this world as ultimately inferior to the heavenly Jerusalem in which the true church participates. In both of these discourses, pride leads to error, heresy, or schism. Humility is thus the *sine qua non* of Augustine's moral epistemology, and it draws these two theological discourses closer together, making them part of the same process of growth in knowledge and love.

To unpack the role of humility with regard to Christ and the Trinity, I return now to *Io. ev. tr.* 1, which I examined above for the basic elements of the trinitarian moral epistemology in our series. This sermon also demonstrates in greater depth the way humility operates within that moral epistemology. First, Augustine identifies humility as the prerequisite for true knowledge of God. This claim builds upon the nature of human perception and the unapproachability of God as an object of fallen human contemplation. Augustine wants to explain how John came to contemplate "Wisdom herself" such that he could utter the profound statements in the prologue. It seems impossible, given 1 Corinthians 2:9, since "no eye has seen nor ear heard" such things, "nor has it entered into (*adscendit*) the heart of man." Augustine parses this verse by emphasizing the directional implication of the verb *adscendere*:

> Perhaps Wisdom did not enter (*adscendit*) John's heart, but rather his heart went up (*adscendit*) to her? For, what comes up into (*adscendit*) a man's heart comes from below to him; but that to which a man's heart rises (*quo autem adscendit cor hominis*) is above man.[65]

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65. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.4.

The Wisdom[66] of God is not one of the sensible things that is perceived "from below." It is not a material reality that might be accessed in the normal modes of human perception. The only way the heart can come to know Wisdom, then, is to rise to it. In order to seek Wisdom, then, one must first properly conceive of one's position with respect to it. One must realize that Wisdom is above one's own mind. This is the first role of intellectual humility, making the mind turn toward what is above itself and away from the material world below to seek for true Wisdom.

Intellectual humility plays a second role, which is connected to the ambiguity of the ablative *quo* in the last line of the above quote. If one reads *quo* as an ablative of agent or means, then the last line reads, "that by which a man's heart rises is above man," signifying that the perspective of humility is not enough to attain sight of Wisdom. Such ascent would not be something accomplished by the heart in its own power. Wisdom herself, in this reading, must elevate the heart to contemplation of what is beyond human perception and thought.

A similar ambiguity is evident at the end of the same paragraph. Seeking to explain the heights to which John has soared, Augustine takes up Psalm 81:6, "You are gods and sons of the Most High." Such elevation, Augustine tells his audience, depends upon humility:

> But we will become more than merely human if we acknowledge in the first place that we are in fact human, that is, so that we might rise up (*surgamus*) to that lofty height from humility; otherwise, if we think that we are something, while in fact we are nothing, not only shall we not take/receive (*accipiamus*) what we are not, but we shall even forfeit what we are.[67]

Humility is certainly the necessary prerequisite for our ascent, but again this can be read as indicative of the power of a person's own virtue. In this sense, one who recognizes her own humble state can then rise up by her own initiative. The verb *surgere* suggests such active agency on the part of the humble human. The key comes, then, in what Augustine intends

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66. For the significance of the divine title/attribute of Wisdom in Augustine's trinitarian theology, *b. vita* 4.34; *f. et symb.* 2.3, 3.3, 4.4; *trin.* 6.1.1–2, 7.2.3–7.3.6. See also, Chad Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology*, 24–28; Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 82–86 and 221–229.

67. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.4.

with the word *accipere*, which can mean either "take" or "receive." If it is the former, then Wisdom is simply that to which we ascend and not that by which we ascend because the human mind, so long as it has the proper humble perspective, can ascend on its own. If it is the latter, though, then Augustine has shifted the focus away from the power of human virtue and toward the primacy of God's agency in raising the humble heart to new heights.

Augustine offers clarification in the paragraphs that follow, situating the primary agency of such intellectual elevation squarely with God. Continuing with the theme of John as a mountain, Augustine turns to Psalm 120:1, "I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from where my help will come to me." The key, though, lies in the second verse that clarifies that the help comes "from the Lord." To Augustine this qualifies the role of mountains:

> So let us lift up our eyes to the mountains from whence help will come to us; but our hope is not to be placed in those mountains. The mountains receive (*accipiunt*) what they provide to us (*nobis ministratae*). Therefore our hope is to be placed in the one from whom the mountains receive (*accipiunt*). . . . Call upon help from the Lord, who made heaven and earth; because the mountains are able to speak, but they themselves are not able to illuminate (*illuminare*) since they themselves are illuminated (*illuminati*) by what they have heard.[68]

Here the significance of *accipere* is unambiguous. Augustine wants to draw the attention of his audience away from the lofty, shining mountains and toward the source of their illumination. We may then read the *accipere* of the previous passage to mean "receive" rather than "take," emphasizing that the rising of the human heart and mind to something beyond our current state, even to the contemplation of Wisdom itself, is something given to us, not accomplished by us.

This, then, is the second role of intellectual humility. In addition to providing the proper perspective that allows us to seek Wisdom above us rather than in the material world below, humility also provides a receptive disposition through a recognition that attaining that which is above us is

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68. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.6–7.

beyond our own capabilities, at least as fallen humans. To contemplate Wisdom, we must first know that we are unable to contemplate Wisdom on our own.

When Augustine comes to the "Arians" (as he generically refers to his opponents) later in the sermon he condemns them for confusing the created with the Creator and the changeable with the unchangeable.[69] This is what it looks like when human hearts attempt to contemplate the divine without first recognizing how high such things are above their abilities. The confusion of the material and the spiritual, of the created and the Creator is a consequence of pride because it ultimately derives from a failure to see one's self as one truly is. It is an attempt to ascend by one's own intellectual abilities rather than through the work of Wisdom that lifts us beyond our limitations. This is how the purification of the heart allows us to see God (Matt 5:8).[70]

Augustine thus links the moral disposition of humility to his trinitarian epistemology, that is, to his understanding of how we come to know Christ's divinity and the triune God. But there is another way in which humility is central to this process. Since our sinful condition is defined by a pride that prevents us from knowing God, then there must be a way in which our pride can be turned to humility. This is one of the key operations of the incarnation for Augustine. Christ's humility cures our pride.[71]

To elucidate this healing dynamic, Augustine encourages his audience to "not withdraw from Christ born in the flesh before coming to Christ born of the one Father, the Word of God with God, through whom all things were made."[72] He describes this, in the words of 1 Corinthians 3:2, as a movement from milk to solid food.[73] The goal of the Christian life is contemplation of God and sight of Christ as the eternal Word of John 1:1, but Augustine urges his audience, "if you cannot form any idea of what he

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69. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.11.

70. See also *Io. ev. tr.* 4.6, where imitation of the humility of John the Baptist allows one to see the one to whom John points.

71. I will have more to say on Augustine's Christology in the next chapter. For now, on the role of humility in the incarnation, see Michael Cameron, *Christ Meets Me Everywhere*, 153–158; Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society*, 94–104; Goulven Madec, *Le Christ de Saint Augustin: La Patrie et la Voie*, rev. ed. (Paris: Desclée, 2001), 50, 123; Basil Studer, *The Grace of Christ and the Grace of God in Augustine of Hippo: Christocentrism or Theocentrism?*, trans. Matthew O'Connell (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1997), 47–54.

72. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.17.

73. See also *ep. Io.* 3.1.

is [as God], wait so that you may grow up. He is solid food. Receive milk, so that you may become strong enough to receive solid food."[74] This is the humility of faith that does not err by rising above itself. By knowing its limits, humble faith is nurtured and eventually brought to the solid food of Christ's divinity. Christ's flesh is the object of that faith, and clinging to it will allow that faith to become sight. Such clinging requires humility, an acceptance that one cannot yet approach the divinity of Christ but must first embrace the God who has become palatable to our material minds. The height of hubris is when the mind rejects the incarnation, the very food that has been prepared so appropriately for us.

Augustine intensifies the Christological dynamic of this humble faith in his next Johannine tractate. Here he describes Christ's cross as "a wooden vessel by which we might cross the sea [of this world]" so that we may come to know Christ as the Father's Son.[75] Those who make this journey are those who "did not withdraw from the cross of Christ and did not contemn the humility of Christ."[76] These are contrasted with "certain philosophers in this world [who] have sought the Creator through the creature" but were brought down by pride:

> They were unwilling to hold onto the humility of Christ, the safe boat in which they would come to that which they were able to see from far away. And the cross of Christ seemed unworthy to them. ... But why was he crucified? Because you needed the wood of his humility. You were swollen up with pride and had been cast far away from that homeland. And the way back was blocked by the disorder of this world. And there is no means to cross over to the homeland, unless you are borne by the wood. ... He was crucified on your account, so that he might teach humility, and because if he had come as God, he would not have been recognized.[77]

Christ's humility heals our pride because to accept the milk of Christ crucified in the flesh, we must forgo our prideful revulsion to it. The final line of the quotation does not list two separate reasons for the incarnation;

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74. *Io. ev. tr.* 1.12.

75. *Io. ev. tr.* 2.2.

76. *Io. ev. tr.* 2.3.

77. *Io. ev. tr.* 2.4.

rather, our inability to recognize the divinity of Christ is a consequence of our pride, and it is only through the lesson of humility, taught by God in Christ, that we are healed and brought to the vision of God. Humility thus unites our growth in knowledge and in love, and it is therefore the primary disposition necessary for such progress in contemplation of the Trinity.

This image of the flesh of Christ as the raft to which we cling as we journey through this world's sea to the homeland of God suggests the image of the church as a boat or as the ark, so popular in North African ecclesiology.[78] Augustine intends this allusion, I believe, because the life of the church is defined by the same disposition of humility that is exemplified by Christ's incarnation and our embrace of his humble flesh. Most notably for this investigation, in *Io. ev. tr.* 4, which focuses on the humility of John the Baptist, Augustine moves from urging his audience to imitate John's humility so that they might see the one to whom he points, to condemning the Donatists for lacking humility.[79] To appreciate how Augustine understands the Donatists to lack this same humility, I return to *en. Ps.* 121, which I discussed above, to highlight the way advancement in knowledge and love leads to the heavenly Jerusalem in which the true church participates. As with Christ and *Io. ev. tr.* 1, here Augustine demonstrates how humility is the basis for this ecclesiological dynamic as well.

The most theologically salient characteristic of the heavenly Jerusalem is that it has, according to Psalm 121:3, a "participation in the *Idipsum*," the self-same, or "Being-Itself."[80] To explain this idea, Augustine leads his audience through an exercise to contrast the eternal nature of God as *Idipsum* with the mutability of created, temporal existence. The *Idipsum* is "the eternal, for anything that is always one thing and then another does not actually exist because it does not abide. It is not completely nonexistent, but it does not exist in the highest sense."[81] The heavenly Jerusalem, to which the sojourning church is journeying and in which it participates,

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78. Cyprian, *unit. eccl.* 6; *epp.* 69.2.1, 74.11.3, 75.15.1; Optatus, *c. Parmen.* 5.1; Augustine, *bapt.* 4.2.3, 4.28.39.

79. *Io. ev. tr.* 4.11.

80. The notion of God as *Idipsum* is particularly prominent in Augustine's *en. Ps.* For those in our series, see *en. Ps.* 120.14, 121.5–8, 121.12, 124.3. See also, Jean-Luc Marion, "*Idipsum*: The Name of God According to Augustine," in *Orthodox Readings of Augustine*, ed. George E. Demacopoulos and Aristotle Papanikolaou (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2008), 167–189; and M.-F. Berrouard, "Idipsum," in BA 71, 845.

81. *en. Ps.* 121.5.

overcomes this limited existence by participating in the *Idipsum* to a superior degree. "The city that participates in the *Idipsum* participates in that stability ... for there all things stand, and nothing passes away."[82] So the church, inasmuch as it is perfected in glory, transcends the limitations of mutable, created existence by sharing (in some way that is left a bit ambiguous here) in the life of God. Not surprisingly, Augustine highlights the significance of this participation by contrasting it with all other forms of existence, echoing the intellectual and moral distinction between the material and the spiritual, the temporal and the eternal, that has so colored his moral epistemology.

Augustine makes a switch here, though, when he redirects this reflection toward the human soul itself. He turns the material/spiritual distinction back upon the Christian's own self-understanding, exhorting her to consider and acknowledge her own limitations, even in the highest dimension of her own being.

> How much is the soul changed by pleasures? How much is the soul split and stretched by desires? The human mind itself, which is called rational, is mutable, is not *Idipsum*. Now it wants something, now it does not. Now it knows, now it does not. Now it remembers, now it forgets. Therefore, no one of himself has *Idipsum*.[83]

An appreciation of this characteristic of created existence in one's own soul is the necessary precondition for participation in the *Idipsum* that constitutes the life of the true church in the heavenly Jerusalem. The proud soul, exemplified by the fallen devil, "desires to be his own *Idipsum*,"[84] and "instead of participating in *Idipsum,* the proud person wants to be his own *Idipsum*."[85] It is only the "humbled soul [that] turns back to the *Idipsum* and finds its place in the city that participates in the *Idipsum*."[86] This sharing in the city is indicative of the life of the true church as it sojourns in this world and as it will be in heaven.

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82. *en. Ps.* 121.6.

83. *en. Ps.* 121.6.

84. *en. Ps.* 121.6.

85. *en. Ps.* 121.8.

86. *en. Ps.* 121.6. See also *ep. Io.* 1.5–6.

Thus, humility allows the human soul to share in God as *Idipsum* by first recognizing that it is not itself *Idipsum*. This is the same dynamic that Augustine describes in the process of coming to know the divinity of Christ, that is, contemplating the Wisdom of God and the Trinity. There the human mind must know that God is beyond its own abilities to understand, and such humility will allow it to be lifted up to Wisdom by Wisdom. Here, participation in the *Idipsum* requires the humility to know that one is not in oneself *Idipsum*. Such participation characterizes the heavenly Jerusalem. And the heavenly Jerusalem provides the identity for the earthly church as it both sojourns from and participates in that spiritual city. Therefore, this type of humility is a constitutive element of participation in the earthly church, at least participation in such a way that leads to the heavenly Jerusalem and a sharing in the *Idipsum*.

Elsewhere Augustine describes what this disposition of humility looks like in a way that brings him back to the key distinction between material and spiritual realities. Humility means being able to distinguish this earthly life from the true life of the eternal Jerusalem. Such a conceptual distinction must also include an affective distinction that values the eternal, spiritual reality over the temporary sojourn of this world. For instance, in his next sermon, *en. Ps.* 122, Augustine demonstrates how awareness of our human frailty, both physical and moral, leads to the proper desire for the true goods that are beyond this life:

> Our infirmity cannot persevere in anything. What about justice? How much justice is there among such trials? We are able to hold back from murder, from adultery, from theft, from perjury, from fraud. But are we able to hold back from evil thoughts? Or from the suggestions of evil desires? What, therefore, is our justice? Let us, therefore, eagerly desire to be whole, to have true riches and true health and true justice. What are true riches? Our heavenly home in Jerusalem.[87]

Here Augustine founds his familiar distinction between the perceived goods of this world and the true goods of the heavenly Jerusalem upon this primary disposition of humility. A proper appreciation of the limitations of one's capabilities in this life leads one to seek for a good that is beyond

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87. *en. Ps.* 122.12.

one's own ability. This humility is the beginning of the reorientation of mind and desire that characterizes Augustine's moral epistemology.

Within the present life of the church, the virtue of humility is further manifest in the virtue of hope,[88] which itself requires the ability to distinguish between *spes* and *res,* hope and the thing hoped for. In *Io. ev. tr.* 10, Augustine expounds upon the church as a temple being built by Christ. But he urges his audience to keep the proper perspective:

> Let us always be humble of heart, and let our joy always be in [God's] presence. Let us not be inflated by any prosperity of this world, but let us know that our happiness will be only when these things have passed away. Now, my brothers, let our joy be in hope. Let no one rejoice as if in a present reality, lest he be stuck to the road. Let all our joy be from a future hope. Let all our desire be for eternal life.[89]

Proper participation in the church of this world requires seeing it as a temporary reality and not the true heavenly Jerusalem to which it is journeying. Mistaking this life for the true *res* represents a loss of the virtue of hope that comes from confusion about the material and the spiritual distinction upon which the moral epistemology turns. Here Augustine connects the primary disposition of humility to this awareness. Humility keeps the proper perspective on one's self and on the sojourning life in which one lives in this world.

As with Christ and the Trinity, humility with respect to the church also has a Christological dynamic for Augustine. Whereas previously Christ was the exemplar of humility who healed our own pride, here Christ is the authority whose place we pridefully usurp when we lack the primary disposition of humility. Augustine articulates this in the same sermon in which he connects humility to proper hope, *Io. ev. tr.* 10. At the beginning of the homily, Augustine points to the humility of the incarnation and how we approach the humble Christ: "If you exalt yourself, you will fall; if you humble yourself, he will draw near."[90] This is the same dynamic Augustine uses to describe how we come to know Christ's divinity in *Io. ev. tr.* 1. But

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88. On the unity of the virtues in Augustine, see *trin.* 6.4.6; *ep.* 167.2. See also J. P. Langan, "Augustine on the Unity of the Virtues," *HThR* 72 (1979): 81–95.

89. *Io. ev. tr.* 10.13. See also *ep. Io.* 1.3.

90. *Io. ev. tr.* 10.1.

here Augustine takes this exhortation to humility and connects it to the life of the church by way of Jesus's cleansing of the temple in John 2. He describes Jesus's actions as a condemnation of the proud: "There is that temple, which was still a figure [of the true one], and the Lord drove from there all those who were seeking their own interests, who had come to the market."[91] They can have no share in the true temple, the true Jerusalem, the true church, who put their own interests above Christ. Humility in the church means submitting one's own earthly desires to the will of Christ and to the good of his whole body, the church.

Augustine names the Donatists as those who set up *cathedrae* that are not committed to Christ and the church but to their own pride.[92] He describes the communions of Primian, Maximian, and Rogatus as sellers of doves, here interpreted as the Holy Spirit.[93] By claiming to have such authority to dispense what legitimately belongs only to Christ, "they attribute to themselves what they are not and lift themselves up, thinking themselves to be something, when they are nothing."[94] He thus condemns the Donatists for their pride in setting their own interests ahead of Christ.

Augustine further reprimands the Donatists for usurping the place of Christ on three other points: baptism, the purity of the church, and the catholicity of the church. The first, baptism, derives from Augustine's assertion that Christ, not the minister, gives the Holy Spirit in baptism. Augustine contrasts the pride of Donatists to the humility of John the Baptist who proclaims, "It is he [Christ] who baptizes" (John 1:33). "But certain ones say, 'It is we who baptize.' They are unable to stand who rejoice in their own voices."[95] The primary disposition of humility in Augustine's moral epistemology discerns the limited role that humans play in the saving work of God. Baptism is the work of Christ and therefore of God; to claim primary human agency is to confuse the created with the Creator because of pride.

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91. *Io. ev. tr.* 10.4.

92. On the Donatists' usurpation of Christ's role as sole mediator, see Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society*, 97–104.

93. For more on this connection between the dove and the Spirit, see Chapter 4, "The Unity of Baptism," esp. pp. 169–184.

94. *Io. ev. tr.* 10.6.

95. *en. Ps.*131.14. For more on Augustine's use of John 1:33, see Chapter 4, "The Unity of Baptism."

Augustine's anti-Donatist understanding of the mixed church of wheat and chaff, an oft-repeated image in our sermon series, also builds upon this idea of usurping the role of Christ. Augustine repeatedly depicts the church of this world, on sojourn from the heavenly Jerusalem, as necessarily composed of both wheat and chaff. The wheat are those whose love has been reoriented toward that heavenly reality and who desire to leave the chaff behind.[96] But this holy desire must express itself as a "patient hope," willing to "bear with the chaff in order to enter the granary."[97] At one level, this willingness to bear with sinful chaff in the church manifests the virtues of hope and love that accompany the reformation of desire in Augustine's moral epistemology. At another level, though, they manifest the primary disposition of humility because the judgment of who is wheat and who is chaff and the burning away of the latter are roles reserved to Christ: "'Fire will go before him and a mighty wind will encircle him' (Ps 49:3). It is the wind's job to remove all the chaff from the floor that is now being threshed, and it is the fire's job to burn what the wind has removed."[98] Christ brings the fire and wind to clear the threshing floor. It is not the role of humans, no matter how pure or sinless, to discern the worthiness of other Christians, at least not in an ultimate sense. To seek to make the church of this world into the pure communion of the heavenly Jerusalem is not only a category confusion between *spes* and *res*, it is an arrogance that sets oneself up in the place of Christ.[99]

Augustine similarly castigates the pride of the Donatists with regard to the catholicity of the church, again with a Christological focus. In his first sermon on 1 John, Augustine comes to the "blindness" of those who hate their brothers (1 John 2:11). He plays on this blindness by mocking the Donatists for stumbling over the mountain that Christ has become in his church (an interpretation of Dan 2:34–35). Stumbling over the mountain means failing to see that Christ's church is spread throughout the world. Their blindness bears witness to their lack of love and, primarily, their lack of humility. This pride lies behind their refusal to communicate with the rest of the church:

> When they are offended by Africans, they separate themselves from
> the whole world because they do not tolerate, for the sake of Christ's

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96. *en. Ps.* 121.1, 8; *Io. ev. tr.* 7.1.

97. *Io. ev. tr.* 10.9.

98. *Io. ev. tr.* 4.2.

99. It is worth repeating here that this is Augustine's exaggerated caricature of Donatist ecclesiology.

peace, those whom they defame, while they do tolerate, for the sake of the Donatist party, those whom they condemn.[100]

This is most likely an allusion to the Maximianist schism within the Donatist communion, a schism they healed without forcing rebaptism upon the Maximians.[101] Augustine interprets the Donatists' willingness to commune with sinners in their own communion but not with the wider Catholic church as evidence that they put their own party interests above those of Christ and his universal church.

Moreover, Augustine describes this pride as a blindness that prevents the Donatists from seeing the reality of the world around them. Their blindness represents an epistemological failure brought about by their moral failings. Thus, Augustine brings his moral epistemology full circle. Humility is the primary disposition of the Christian life, and it is grounded in the example of Christ's humble incarnation through which our own pride is healed. Such humility will heal our minds, allowing us to be brought, eventually, to the true sight of God in which we are able to know God in a way impossible in this life. At the same time, this very same humility allows us to participate in the life of the true church as it sojourns in this world and awaits perfection in the heavenly Jerusalem. In humility we are trained both morally and intellectually to tell the difference between this world and the heavenly Jerusalem so that we might come to participate in the latter through hope and love. Improper belief and practice regarding the life of the church are, like heretical beliefs about Christ and the Trinity, equally rooted in a lack of humility and manifest as blindness. This blindness is a failure of the intellect to conceive of God and the church correctly, especially as both are approached through cultivation of the ability to distinguish between the material and the spiritual in both mind and desire. Thus, Augustine's moral epistemology, especially its primary disposition of humility, unites the topics of Trinity and church into a single discourse about the reformation and reorientation of human thought and desire.

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100. *ep. Io.* 1.13.

101. On the Maximianist schism, see Maureen Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa: The Donatist World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 133–135; Emin Tengström, *Donatisten und Katholiken* (Gotheborg: Elander 1964), 80–90; W. H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1952), 213–220. For Augustine's exploitation of the schism, see Brian Gronewoller, "Felicianus, Maximianism, and Augustine's Anti-Donatist Polemic," *SP* 70 (2013): 409–418.

Conclusion

In our sermon series, Augustine jumps back and forth between the seemingly distinct topics of the Trinity and the church. In this chapter I have done the same thing, bouncing between the two issues in order to draw out one thread that I believe ties them together for Augustine, namely, his understanding of the necessary reformation of thought and desire. This moral epistemology governs Augustine's depiction not only of what the church is and how we come to know it but also of how we come to participate in the church's true identity in the heavenly Jerusalem. This is also how we come to know God through faith in this life as we are brought to the vision of God promised to the pure of heart. This is all part of one movement, one ascent, one soteriology.

This represents, however, a fairly weak connection. Sure, Augustine has a particular understanding of love and knowledge, but such a moral epistemology could seemingly unite any part of his theology with any other part. I believe, however, that this initial connection is just the crest of a much deeper relationship. In the following chapters I will demonstrate that the Trinity and the church not only have a common theological language for Augustine, but that the former is the primary agent in the life of the latter. That is to say, the relationship between the Trinity and the church in Augustine's theology is more than a shared language and set of assumptions. Rather, the church, as he describes it in his preaching against the Donatists, is defined by the work of the Trinity. In the next chapter I will investigate how the reformation of mind and heart that leads us to sight of God is accomplished through our incorporation into Christ's body, the church.

2

The Body of Christ

Introduction

Augustine preaches with a purpose: to cultivate love and faith in his audience. He trains his congregation to order their desires and purify their thoughts. This moral epistemology, as I have termed it, provides one connection between Augustine's ecclesiology and his theology of the Trinity. More important, this somewhat broad correlation suggests a deeper, stronger relationship between Trinity and church in Augustine's preaching. As I showed with the discussion of humility, Augustine's trinitarian and ecclesiological discourses do not simply share a common moral epistemology; rather, the church is the context for the reformation of thought and love that prepares us for the vision of God. Even this claim, however, understates the degree to which trinitarian dynamics shape Augustine's anti-Donatist ecclesiology.

These next three chapters show how this reformation of our minds and our desires comes about through the work of the triune God within the church that is the body of Christ (Chapter 2) united by the love of the Holy Spirit (Chapter 3) and established through the sanctifying work of baptism (Chapter 4). This is the primary way in which Augustine's anti-Donatist ecclesiology can be considered trinitarian: the church's identity and integrity are expressions of the life and work of the Trinity, not the moral condition of bishops or the integrity of the wider community. Moreover, Augustine's articulation of the way in which the life of the church and the life of the Trinity are intertwined draws upon pro-Nicene principles. These principles are not so much formulae of natures, persons, and substances, as they are traditions of exegesis and sensibilities inherited from his Latin predecessors in the theological polemics of the late fourth century.

For Augustine, the unity of the church is the unity of the body of Christ with its head, Christ himself. This is the *totus Christus*, the "whole Christ," an image that pervades Augustine's preaching on the Psalms throughout his career and that appears throughout our sermon series in both the Johannine homilies and those on the Psalms of Ascent.[1] In separating from the unity of the church, Augustine argues, the Donatists actually separate themselves from Christ.[2] Behind this powerful rhetoric lies Augustine's pro-Nicene, Christological epistemology: the revelation of the Father's Word through Christ's incarnation is accomplished in our union with that Word through his body, the church. Furthermore, because of this revelatory dynamic, any talk of Augustine's "Christological" ecclesiology must take into consideration its trinitarian character as well. Christ, for Augustine and his Latin pro-Nicene predecessors, is always the Father's Word spoken to us, revealing both himself and the Father so that we might come to know and love them both.[3]

My argument in this chapter has three main parts. First, I identify the grammatical[4] practice of prosopological exegesis as the best way to understand how Augustine speaks of our unity with Christ in these sermons. In his reading of John 3:13, Augustine shows how the Christian is incorporated into Christ's own grammatical subject. The union of Christians in Christ is an extension of Christ's own self-predication that joins us to

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1. For recent treatments of this theme, see David Vincent Meconi, *The One Christ: St. Augustine's Theology of Deification* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2013); and Yves Meesen, "*Christus totus*, interprète de sa manifestation," in *La christologie et la Trinité chez les Pères*, ed. Marie-Anne Vannier (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2013), 177–194.

2. This emphasis on the unity of Christ and the church in Augustine is a focal point of Emile Mersch, S.J., *The Whole Christ: The Historical Development of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body in Scripture and Tradition*, trans. John Kelly (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co., 1938), esp. 420–438. Mersch is concerned primarily, though, with the communication of grace and divinization. He does not unpack the way in which pro-Nicene epistemological concerns give shape to Augustine's understanding of that union. This is the focus of my contribution. See also Pasquale Borgomeo, *L'Église de ce temps dans la prédication de saint Augustin* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1972), 209–234.

3. The Spirit will, for the sake of analysis, be placed on the back burner for the duration of this chapter, only to be brought to a rolling boil in the next. This division is, of course, alien to Augustine's own thinking. After all, it is the love of the Spirit that unites us to the Body of Christ.

4. As will be made clear below, when I describe something as "grammatical" I intend to signify its relationship to grammatical practices, such as prosopology, that shape Augustine's reading of scripture, or, more generally, to issues of language and predication, such as the complex grammatical subject of Christ, who is spoken of in multiple and seemingly conflicting ways in scripture.

each other by joining us to Christ's "I," such that there is one singer, *unus homo*, who ascends to God through these Psalms in the one Christ. By deploying this method to speak of Christ's complex identity, Augustine reflects the Christological concerns and exegetical practices characteristic of the fourth-century trinitarian debates. This in turn provides him with his anti-Donatist method for reading the Psalms as endorsing unity in the singular subject of Christ and condemning those who would separate from or divide that one Christ.

Next, I tie this grammatical exegesis of John 3:13 to the use of that verse as it appears throughout these sermons to illustrate the salvific purpose of our incorporation into Christ. Here Augustine emphasizes the epistemological character of the church's ascent with and in Christ. By tracing John 3:13 through these sermons, and placing it in the context of Augustine's epistemological approach to the Trinity in *trin.* 1, I show what Augustine believes to be the soteriological consequence of the Donatists' failure to participate in the body of Christ: they do not ascend with the Son to sight of the Father.

Finally, I trace Augustine's exegesis of Colossians 3:1–4 and Acts 9:4, the verses that he reads in concert with John 3:13, to demonstrate the way in which unity with Christ brings about the reorientation and reformation of mind and heart that characterize Augustine's moral epistemology. Colossians 3:1–4 introduces into our ascent with Christ the material/spiritual distinction that is the key for the mind's retraining. To be risen with Christ is to have our minds redirected away from the material and toward the spiritual. For its part, Acts 9:4 highlights how the unity of Christians with each other and with Christ in his body effects the growth in love that accompanies and makes possible our intellectual ascent.

Thus the entire moral epistemology that I outlined in Chapter 1 may be understood to be accomplished in and through the body of Christ, and Augustine articulates this dynamic by adapting the Latin pro-Nicene tradition to his anti-Donatist preaching. Ending this chapter with an emphasis on the moral component of our ascent to sight of God will set up the topic for my next chapter: the love of the Holy Spirit that establishes the unity of the church in the body of Christ.

The Grammar of Unity

Augustine's interpretation of the Psalms of Ascent against the Donatists deploys a specific grammatical method. Prosopology, a practice derived

from the *grammaticus* and originally used to interpret Homer, Plato, Virgil, and other poetic/dramatic texts, identifies the *dramatis personae*.[5] It brings three questions to the text: *Quis loquitur? Ad quem loquitur? De quo loquitur?*[6] In this exercise, students learn to distinguish between speakers, note when there has been a sudden change in speaker, and discern what type of speech is proper for which speaker. The theological use of the terms *persona* and πρόσωπον builds upon this grammatical practice, referring to a character, either literary or dramatic. It is not so much the mask of the theater as the individual literary subject and her modes of speaking that are meant by this use of the term, though of course the two uses are closely correlated.[7] In using this grammatical method to describe the relationship between Christ and the church, Augustine stands in a long tradition of Christian exegesis that helped shape the Christological and trinitarian disputes of the fourth century.[8]

Prosopology and Fourth-Century Theology

Early Christians developed prosopological exegesis to parse the relationships between the persons in the Trinity, between Christ's humanity and his divinity, and between Christ and the rest of humanity. By the time Augustine deploys this method, it has become a standard means for articulating Christological and trinitarian theology. Three important works in the last thirty years have explored the significance of this form of exegesis for the development of Christian theology.

The first of these works is M.-J. Rondeau's *Exégèse Prosopologique et Théologie*, an invaluable study that analyzes the Christian use of prosopology from the New Testament's affirmation of Christ as the subject of Old

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5. "[Prosopologie] consiste à s'interroger sur l'identité du personnage mis en scène, en particulier sur l'identité due personnage qui parle. . . et, corrélativement sur celle du 'tu' auquel ce 'je' s'adresse et qui est susceptible de lui donner la réplique; plus rarement, et par une démarche qui est en réalité hétérogène, sur le 'lui.'" Marie-Josèphe Rondeau, *Exégèse Prosopologique et Théologie*, vol. 2 of *Les Commentaires Patristiques du Psautier (IIIe-Ve siècles)* (Rome: Pont. Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1985), 8.

6. Rondeau, *Exégèse Prosopologique*, 22.

7. For a thorough summary of the etymology of *persona*, see Hubertus Drobner, *Person-Exegese und Christologie bei Augustinus: zur Herkunft der Formel Una Persona* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 6–8.

8. For another recent investigation of how Augustine's grammar shapes his understanding of the relationship between Christ and the church, see Kimberly F. Baker, "*Transfiguravit in se*: The Sacramentality of Augustine's Doctrine of the *Totus Christus*," *SP* 70 (2013): 559–567.

Testament prophecy[9] to the trinitarian and Christological uses of *persona* in the fourth- and fifth-century controversies, focusing on exegesis of the Psalms. Though she briefly notes the use of prosopological exegesis in Justin, Irenaeus, and Tertullian, Rondeau begins in earnest with Origen. Like Tertullian, Origen uses prosopological exegesis to parse the multiple speaking subjects of divine speech, emphasizing their distinct identities. By the fourth century, prosopological interpretation of the Psalms (and other texts) has become a common mode of anti-monarchian polemic, shared by everyone from Eusebius to Hilary.[10]

In addition to this anti-monarchian focus, Origen also develops three related Christological uses for prosopological exegesis. First, the Psalms (along with other prophetic speech) can be understood as speaking ἐκ προσώπου of Christ, that is, in the person of Christ. Second, Origen often uses πρόσωπον to refer to that which the Word took up or assumed in the incarnation, that is, his humanity.[11] Third, in addition to these two uses, a prosopological reading of the Psalms leads Origen to consider the relationship of Christ to the wider humanity on behalf of which he speaks; this can refer either to the saints in particular or to humanity in general.[12] Origen therefore uses prosopological exegesis to find Christ speaking in the Psalms, to delineate between the divine and human aspects of Christ, and to speak of humanity's unity with Christ.

Thanks in part to Origen's influence, all of these trinitarian and Christological uses of prosopological exegesis become standard methods

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9. Of particular interest is Rondeau's discussion of the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:27–35) who asks περὶ τινός or *de quo* the prophet Isaiah was speaking, as well as Christ's own exposition of the different Lords of Ps 109(110):1 in Matt 22:41–46 (Rondeau, *Exégèse Prosopologique*, 21–22).

10. See Rondeau, *Exégèse Prosopologique*, 31ff. This anti-monarchian origin of *persona* is particularly significant for Augustine and Latin pro-Nicenes in general. As Michel Barnes notes, "the internal disposition—the 'logic'—of [Latin trinitarian] theology originates in anti-monarchianism." Barnes, "Latin Trinitarian Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity*, ed. Peter Phan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 70. On the continued influence of anti-monarchianism in Latin theology, see Lewis Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 72–80. Readers should also heed Ayres's warning that "attempts to summarize Latin tradition by an etymological focus on a particular term—such as the oft-repeated claim that *persona* originally means 'mask,' an etymology which is then taken to reveal something essential about Latin tradition—have little cogency" (77). My hope is that the summary narrative that follows, based upon Rondeau, will attend to "the actual semantic range of the term" in a way that opens up, rather than limits, our understanding of *persona*.

11. Rondeau, *Exégèse Prosopologique*, 125–127.

12. Rondeau, *Exégèse Prosopologique*, 134.

for reading scripture in the debates of the fourth century. In the West, this influence was mediated through a variety of authors, but most significant to this study is the work of Hilary of Poitiers. During his exile in the East, Hilary was introduced to the exegetical methods of Origen through the work of Eusebius of Caesarea, whose writings on the Psalms Hilary translated.[13] Both Eusebius and Hilary continue Origen's practice of reading the Psalms as speech of or about Christ. Moreover, both use πρόσωπον/*persona* as a way to distinguish between Christ speaking according to his divinity and Christ speaking according to his humanity. In both cases, then, *persona* as a Christological category functions more like *natura* will for Chalcedonian Christians a century later: that is, it represents that which is distinct in the incarnate Word.[14] This is possible because *persona* does not yet have the theological or philosophical specificity that it will gain in future debates; in these discussions it primarily identifies a way of distinguishing different types of speech in scripture.

Finally, for Hilary, Origen's emphasis on πρόσωπον as that which the Word assumes in the incarnation takes on special significance in his assertion that all of humanity is assumed by Christ, that is, not only a complete human nature but every member of that nature. For Hilary the move from Christ speaking according to his humanity to Christ speaking as all of humanity has a clear theological basis, since it is in that universal incorporation that salvation is accomplished.

A real change comes with Didymus, who begins to use πρόσωπον to refer not to the diversity in Christ but to the unity of Christ. The "person" is the single speaking subject who can speak in different ways, according to his divinity or his humanity (ὡς ἀπὸ του ἀνθρωπου/θεου).[15] For Didymus, "in Christ, the 'I' is the Word who is incarnate, not the man who was assumed."[16] Thus Didymus develops a grammar for parsing scripture's predication of Christ and Christ's own speech (particularly in the Psalms) in a way that unites the grammatical subject while allowing for diversity

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13. For Hilary's encounter with Origen's work while in exile, see Ellen Scully, "The Assumption of All Humanity in Saint Hilary of Poitiers' *Tractatus super Psalmos*" (PhD diss., Marquette University, 2011), 44–53. Scully highlights Origen's prosopological method as a more promising type of influence than generic "Platonism."

14. See Rondeau, *Exégèse Prosopologique*, 323–329; and Scully, "The Assumption of All Humanity," 203–210.

15. Rondeau, *Exégèse Prosopologique*, 240–260.

16. Rondeau, *Exégèse Prosopologique*, 250.

within that complex subject. Moreover, like Origen, Eusebius, and Hilary, Didymus connects his Christological language to his ecclesiology. Not only is the Pauline "body of Christ" deployed to describe Christ speaking of his ecclesial body in the Psalms, but even the soul of Christ, so central to Didymus's anti-Apollinarian polemic, is understood both as the individual human soul of Christ and the souls of the faithful who have (at least) a moral unity with Christ.[17] In this way, Didymus understands even the Pauline body of Christ to include the entire human nature, body and soul.

The major exegetical influence on Augustine and the primary mediator to him of Origen's prosopological method is Ambrose. The bishop of Milan knows at least some of Didymus,[18] but he does not seem to have picked up Didymus's use of πρόσωπον as indicating the single subject of Christ. Instead, Ambrose follows Hilary and Origen (as does Jerome) in using *persona* to describe Christ speaking *ex persona hominis*.[19] Ambrose parallels this phrase with the phrases *in forma Dei* and *in forma hominis*, à la Philippians 2:6–7. Again, then, the use of *persona* signifies something similar to *natura*, though without the philosophical precision of an ontological category. Instead, it is a grammatical category used to describe different modes of speech such that the speaking subject can speak in several *personae*.[20]

This rehearsal of Rondeau's work suggests that Augustine inherits several key theological emphases associated with the practice of prosopological exegesis. Most notably, there is ambiguity as to how to identify and enumerate the complex *persona(e)* of Christ and a related movement toward connecting the grammatical subject of Christ to those who in some way share in Christ's humanity. The first of these concerns is the

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17. Rondeau, *Exégèse Prosopologique*, 266–271.

18. In particular, Ambrose's *De Spiritu Sancto* is heavily indebted to Didymus's work on the Spirit.

19. Rondeau, *Exégèse Prosopologique*, 419–424.

20. For a more detailed analysis of the relationship between Ambrose's and Augustine's Christology, see Brian Daley, "The Giant's Twin Substances: Ambrose and the Christology of Augustine's *Contra sermonem Arianorum*," in *Augustine: Presbyter factus sum*, Collectanea Augustiniana 2, ed. Joseph T. Lienhard, Earl C. Muller, and Roland Teske (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 477–495. Daley describes Ambrose as having a sense of the unified subject in two natures. Though some of the English translations that Daley uses suggest a single "person" as the locus of that unity, the Latin of Ambrose does not use *persona* in this way. Instead, in speaking of unity, Ambrose uses *unus* to emphasize that there are not two subjects in Christ. One exception to this is his use of *persona* at *in. Ps.* 61.5. For a discussion of this passage, see Drobner, *Person-Exegese*, 214–216.

topic of the second modern work on prosopological exegesis that I want to highlight, Hubertus Drobner's *Person-Exegese*. Published a year after Rondeau's study, *Person-Exegese* provides a detailed treatment of prosopology in the work of Augustine, narrating the Bishop of Hippo's "discovery" of the formula *una persona* to speak of the oneness of Christ in 411.[21] Drobner traces Augustine's use of *persona* as it morphs from a primarily grammatical term to a technical ontological category. Our sermon series from 406–407 represents a period before Augustine has "discovered" the ontological category of Christ's *una persona*. As I will show, he still operates primarily within grammatical categories to describe the unity of Christ's own subject and of the church as it shares in that subject.

Finally, Michael Fiedrowicz's *Psalmus Vox Totius Christi*, which analyzes the *enarrationes in Psalmos*, may be seen as a successor to both Rondeau's and Drobner's work.[22] Although Fiedrowicz is not as concerned about the specific term *persona*, he establishes a taxonomy of Augustine's options for speaking of the *voces* of the Psalms: the Psalms can be read as *vox ad Christum, vox de Christo, vox Christi, vox de ecclesia*, or *vox ecclesiae*.[23] These categories allow Fiedrowicz more options for understanding the theological significance of the prosopological exegesis of the Psalms. Fiedrowicz himself spends only a little time discussing prosopology per se, but his heuristic of the interrelated *voces* ought to be seen as a way of speaking of the same sort of grammatical exegesis without strict dependence on the term *persona*. Moreover, because Fiedrowicz is not as interested in technical Christological formulations of *natura* and *persona*, he is able to highlight the more poetic way in which the prosopological exegesis of the Psalms incorporates both Christ and the church into *unus homo*, "the 'I' who speaks in the Psalms with the voice of this

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21. The key text is Augustine's *ep.* 137. In addition to Drobner, *Person-Exegese*, see Lewis Ayres, "Christology as Contemplative Practice: Understanding the Union of Natures in Augustine's *Ep.* 137," in *In the Shadow of the Incarnation: Essays in Honor of Brian Daley*, ed. Peter Martens (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 2008), 190–211; also Goulven Madec, *Le Christ de Saint Augustin: La Patrie et la Voie*, rev. ed. (Paris: Desclée, 2001), 192–195. Drobner also has a series of English-language articles that serve as summaries of his German monograph: "Outlines of the Christology of St. Augustine," Parts I–III, *Melita Theologica*, 40 (1989): 45–57, 143–154, and *Melita Theologica*, 41 (1990): 53–68.

22. Michael Fiedrowicz, *Psalmus Vox Totius Christi: Studien zu Augustins* enarrationes in Psalmos (Freiburg: Herder, 1997). As with Drobner, Fiedrowicz, *Psalmus Vox* has a helpful English abbreviation: Fiedrowicz, introduction to *Expositions of the Psalms* 1–32, WSA III/15, 13–66.

23. Fiedrowicz, *Psalmus Vox*, 237–238, and introduction, 44–45.

one individual,"[24] that is, the *totus Christus*. It is this prosopological Christ that Augustine presents in our sermon series as the locus of the unity from which Donatists depart.

Prosopology in the Psalms of Ascent

Augustine uses Christological prosopological exegesis against the Donatists in our sermons in his preaching on the Psalms of Ascent (*en. Ps.* 119–133). This claim requires a bit of demonstration, however, because the term *persona* is all but absent from these fifteen sermons and because previous studies of Augustine's prosopological method have mostly ignored this group. For instance, in his study of early Christian prosopological exegesis of the Psalms, Rondeau makes great use of Augustine's *enarrationes*, but he completely skips over the Psalms of Ascent. For his part, Drobner makes two brief mentions of *en. Ps.* 132.5, but otherwise he is as silent on the Psalms of Ascent as Rondeau is.[25] This silence comes, I believe, from the absence of the term *persona* in these fifteen sermons, aside from the one trinitarian use at *en. Ps.* 132.5. This is an odd lacuna for Augustine, who uses the term *persona* over 180 times in his *enarrationes* as a whole. Despite the silence of Drobner and Rondeau on these sermons, and even without the explicit use of the term *persona*, prosopological exegesis is still the guiding motif for Augustine's reading of the Psalms of Ascent and the way in which he speaks of the unity of Christ with his body in these sermons against the Donatists.

First, throughout these nine months of preaching, Augustine makes frequent appeals to prosopological exegesis with the more explicit term *persona* in the Johannine homilies. He uses the phrase *ex persona* twice, once to explain that the prophet Isaiah speaks *ex persona Christi* in calling himself both bride and bridegroom (Is 61:10),[26] and once to describe Christ as speaking *ex persona Iudaeorum* in claiming that Jews "worship what we know" (John 4:22).[27] Similarly, Augustine employs the term *persona* to distinguish between the figures of John the Baptist and Elijah,[28]

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24. Fiedrowicz, introduction, 56–57.

25. Drobner, *Person-Exegese*, 32, 112.

26. *ep. Io.* 1.2.

27. *Io. ev. tr.* 15.26.

28. *Io. ev. tr.* 4.6.

to explain how the bridegroom at the wedding of Cana is a figure for the *personam domini*,[29] and to describe the literary relationship between John the Evangelist and John the Baptist, the former speaking *per personam* of the latter.[30] So prosopology as an exegetical (and homiletic) method is certainly one of Augustine's tools during this series.

Second, though the term *persona* only appears once in Augustine's expositions of the Psalms of Ascent, the central motif of his preaching in this series is prosopological; he focuses his audience's attention on the identity of the singer who ascends to Jerusalem. In the first sermon in the series, the exposition of Psalm 119, Augustine connects the song of the ascending psalmist to the Christian life of his audience: "We too are to ascend."[31] Augustine draws out the parallels between the Psalm's words and the life of the Christian until the parallel becomes identification through a common voice:

> What does this one [the psalmist] say? "How long is my wandering sojourn!" This is very much the voice of the church as it labors on this earth. It is the voice of one who cries out from the ends of the earth in another psalm: "From the ends of the earth I have cried out to you" (Ps 60:3). Who among us cries from the ends of the earth? Not I, nor you, nor that guy over there; but the whole church cries from the ends of the earth. . . . All the saints are *unus homo* in Christ because the church is a holy unity. It is this *unus homo* who says, "From the ends of the earth I have cried out to you."[32]

This examination of the psalmist's *vox* is programmatic for Augustine's exegesis of the Psalms of Ascent. The Christian life is one of ascent, and we learn how to make that ascent by finding our voice in the Psalms—a voice that arises from many Christians joined as one to each other by

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29. *Io. ev. tr.* 9.2.

30. *Io. ev. tr.* 15.3.

31. *en. Ps.* 119.1.

32. *en. Ps.* 119.7. Throughout this chapter I will leave *unus homo* untranslated, as there is no good option for an English equivalent. To say "one man" is unnecessarily exclusive. To say "one human" is not only awkward but theologically problematic. The obvious option would be "one person," but here "person" carries such weighty baggage that I do not want to use it unless I am translating *persona*.

being united with and into the one Christ.[33] The prosopological exegesis of these Psalms is a reflexive activity; Augustine invites the congregation to hear themselves singing as they ascend. *Quis loquitur*? The church does, but as *unus homo* in Christ.

Third—and most important for my argument—this prosopological identification of the church with the ascending psalmist has a polemical use for Augustine that will likewise persist throughout the next nine months of his preaching: he denounces the Donatists for not participating in that *unus homo* who sings in the Psalms. This condemnation of the Donatists flows from Augustine's understanding of true speech as a reflection of the inscrutable human heart. Merely sounding out the words of the Psalms does not make one a part of the *unus homo* who ascends in one voice. The first Psalm of Ascent ends with a phrase custom tailored for Augustine's anti-Donatist polemic: "I have been peaceful with those who hate peace" (Ps 119:7). Augustine takes this opportunity to demonstrate how far the Donatists' hearts are from this sentiment, no matter how often they might give utterance to peaceful words. "Who are the ones who hate peace? Those who rip asunder unity. If they had not hated peace, they would have remained within unity. . . . *This voice [in the Psalm] is either ours or theirs. You must pick out* [elige] *whose it is!*"[34] Not only does Augustine use the prosopological question to distinguish between Catholics and Donatists, but he also trains his congregation to do the same thing. The bishop remains, to some extent, a *grammaticus*, training his congregation to parse the distinction between Christians united in the body of Christ and Donatists refusing to be counted within that unity.

Enarrationes in Psalmos 122.1: The Descending and Ascending Christ

Having shown that, although Augustine's sermons on the Psalms of Ascent lack extensive use of the term *persona*, prosopological exegesis is still a dominant feature both in them and in the connected Johannine

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33. Fiedrowicz, *Psalmus Vox*, consistently highlights this incorporation of the Christian into the *vox* of Christ in the Psalms. For Fiedrowicz, though, the focus is on the rehabilitation of the passions, for which the Psalms serve as both *speculum* and *medicam*. He does not, however, make much of the process of ascent as our journey to God through Christ. See esp. 145–233.

34. *en. Ps.* 119.9 (my emphasis).

tractates, I now turn to the theological significance of this grammatical method for speaking of the unity of Christ and the church in his preaching against the Donatists. Augustine's *en. Ps.* 122 opens with a passage that may serve as a summary of the *totus Christus* as it functions throughout the series. The heart of this passage is Augustine's grammatical exegesis of John 3:13, which will show how our inclusion in the grammatical subject of Christ is a function of Augustine's trinitarian epistemology. We come to know the Father through the mediating and revelatory work of the Son's incarnation by incorporation into Christ. This trinitarian conception of our ascent in both knowledge and love, articulated through pro-Nicene principles and exegesis, shapes Augustine's defense of the united church against the Donatists.

Augustine's *en. Ps.* 122 is his fourth on the Psalms of Ascent, and he begins the sermon by reminding his audience of the major theme that ties these Psalms together:

> They are songs of one ascending and loving, and he is ascending because he is loving. . . . Even though now we have fallen by evil desire, hope remains for us. If we acknowledge who it is who has not fallen but descended to us, we will ascend by clinging to him, because we are not able to rise by our own strength.[35]

Augustine not only reminds his audience of the theme of ascent to God, but he also reminds them of the central question of his exegesis of the Psalms: Whose voice is it that we hear in these Psalms? The question of *quis descendit* and, ultimately, *quis ascendit* brings Augustine's audience back to this prosopological focus of identifying the speaker of the Psalms, typically understood as Christ speaking either for himself or for/with the church.

Keeping with this Christocentric reading of the Psalms, Augustine introduces John 3:13 as a key text for understanding the nature of this ascent through Christ:

> The Lord Jesus Christ himself said, "No one has ascended to heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven." Yet he seems to have spoken about himself alone [*de se*

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35. *en. Ps.* 122.1.

solo videtur dixisse]. Therefore, do the rest of us remain below, if he alone ascends who alone descended? What ought the rest of us to do? We must be united to his body so that there might be one Christ who both descends and ascends.[36]

John 3:13 poses a grammatical and theological problem for Augustine. The simple grammatical work of parsing the text through the prosopological exercise requires that the reader make an interpretive choice with theological consequences. The central question is *de quo loquitur*: About whom is Christ speaking? But the question of *de quo loquitur* becomes even more significant when it is reflexive, when it refers back to the *quis loquitur*.

At first glance, then, the grammar of John 3:13 presents the following theological problem: If Christ is speaking *de se solo*, then what becomes of the Christian life of ascent?[37] Augustine does not answer the question by offering a new answer to the *de quo loquitur*. Christ does in fact speak *de se solo*. But the *solus* who ascends, the *unus Christus*, includes those who are united to Christ's body. Augustine dilates the reflexive grammatical subject of Christ so that it might include the members of Christ's body. The Christian life of ascent to God requires that we become participants in the subject of Christ's "I."

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36. *en. Ps.* 122.1.

37. The problem of solitary ascent in this verse is addressed by Pierre-Marie Hombert, "L'Exégèse Augustinienne de *Io.* 3,13 entre Orient et Occident," in *L'Esegesi dei Padri Latini* (Rome: Institutum Patristicum Augustinianum, 2000), 335–361. Hombert uses Augustine's exegesis of John 3:13 as an opportunity to examine the confluence of Augustine's Western and Eastern influences. Hombert proposes two major sources for Augustine's reading of this verse: First, there is a Western tradition of reading the text against Apelles and other "gnostics" who see the verse as suggesting that Christ had no real—or at least no lasting—physical body. Tertullian reads the verse as signifying that Christ rises with the flesh in a way that guarantees our own resurrection through sharing in the same flesh. This, Hombert argues, is the root of Augustine's reading of John 3:13 as demonstrating the unity of Christ and the church. Second, Hombert proposes an Eastern reading of the verse connected with Apollinaris and other "anti-Sabellians," including Hilary. Here the "*homme céleste*" guards the unity of Christ, when John 3:13 is read with 1 Cor 2:8. This pairing is transmitted from Hilary to Ambrose to Augustine. Throughout this analysis, Hombert rightly emphasizes the fact that the two ways of reading John 3:13 are inseparable for Augustine: the ecclesial reading is founded upon the Christological. In this chapter, then, I want to affirm Hombert's reading but push it in three ways: First, aside from a passing mention, Hombert does not discuss the use of John 3:13 in our sermon series of 406–407, a use that is indicative of some wider trends in Augustine's trinitarian ecclesiology. Second, Hombert does not situate exegesis of John 3:13 in the context of prosopological exegesis. This context, I believe, gives us a better appreciation for how Augustine bridges the Christological and the ecclesiological in the period before 411 and the discovery of *persona* in *ep.* 137. Third, and most significant,

Augustine adds an ecclesiological dimension to this participation in Christ's grammatical subject when he turns from John 3:13 to the actual Psalm text at hand: "I lift my eyes up" (Ps 122:1). Again, grammar is the key: "it does not say 'to you, O Lord, we lift our eyes,' but, 'to you, O Lord, I lift my eyes.'"[38] Augustine urges his audience to learn to sing as one subject, as *unus homo*, because, "you who are many are one in Christ."[39] The unity of the church with itself, as *unus homo*, is founded upon its unity with the singular subject of Christ, the *unus Christus* who ascends. Augustine's theological argument for the unity of the members of Christ's body with the head uses grammatical categories to illustrate that organic[40] unity. Augustine does not introduce a separate ontological category, such as *persona*, to identify exactly what is *unus*, neither among the members of the united church nor in that church's union to Christ. It is enough for him that it is Christ who is *unus*.[41]

And perhaps in his preaching there is no need for precise ontological categories. Augustine is exhorting his audience to unity with Christ and each other and condemning the Donatists for removing themselves from that union; he is not offering a technical diagram of the mechanics of such union, apart from the narrative description of our incorporation into Christ.[42] But Augustine's exegesis of this passage elsewhere often does wade into more ontological waters in describing the way in which the Son

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Hombert does not mention the way in which the ecclesiological and Christological readings are united in a Christological epistemology. Below I will unpack the way in which our ascent with and in Christ is the way we come to see and to know the Father through his Son. This revelatory function represents Augustine's pro-Nicene adaptation of a previously Apollinarian reading of John 3:13.

38. *en. Ps.* 122.2.

39. *en. Ps.* 122.2.

40. By "organic," here and throughout, I simply mean images for unity that are grounded in "bodily" language. It does not connote a unity that is more "natural" than any other sort.

41. This should not suggest, however, that the unity is any less "real." Though Augustine uses grammatical categories and not ontological ones, this does not necessarily mean that it does not have ontological consequences. Here I disagree with Maarten Wisse, who argues that such discussions of unity with Christ are primarily linguistic and therefore *not* ontological. See Wisse, *Trinitarian Theology beyond Participation: Augustine's* de Trinitate *and Contemporary Theology* (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2011), 124–130.

42. Cf. John Norris, "The Theological Structure of Augustine's Exegesis in the *Tractatus in Evangelium Ioannis*," in *Augustine: Presbyter factus sum*, ed. Joseph T. Lienhard, Earl C. Muller, and Roland Teske (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 385–394. Norris highlights this pastoral dimension as the primary lens through which to view Augustine's preached theology in the *Io. ev. tr.* Though these homilies are not "a commentary. . . written for a learned

of God is also the Son of Man in the incarnation. This way of reading John 3:13—employing a pro-Nicene Christology linked to trinitarian concerns—lies behind Augustine's grammatical description of our union with Christ as his body.

Augustine first discusses John 3:13 in 396–397, ten years before our sermon series. In the latter half of *On Christian Combat* (*agon.*), he rehearses a series of heresies and errors that the Christian ought to avoid. These include those who, on the basis of John 3:13, contend that "our Lord did not ascend into heaven with his body" because "as his body did not descend from heaven, it could not ascend into heaven."[43] In his response, Augustine agrees with these heretics to some degree. It is true, he argues, that the body *qua* body did not ascend; rather it was "raised up by the one rising, the one who ascended." To illustrate this, Augustine describes a man who descends naked from a mountain, gets dressed at the bottom, and then mounts back up: "We are not thinking about the clothing (*uestem*) he raised up with him; we say that he who was clothed (*uestitus est*) alone ascended."[44] The grammatical subject is the one who descends without humanity and then puts humanity on as a garment, so that the

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audience, nor a critical theological work," they still have as their purpose to "make Christ better known, to continue the work of the Incarnation" (386). However, in his emphasis on the semiotic function of preaching, Norris makes much of the "ascent-descent" theme that pervades these sermons. For Norris, though there is a Christological *res* behind the *signum* of the preaching act, the homiletical ascent and descent are most significant: "The ascent is the preacher's own internal and spiritual contemplation of God in Christ, whereas the preaching itself is the actual descent, where one attempts to communicate through the deficiencies of language the inner words of the heart and mind" (387). Norris is not wrong; Augustine's preaching does function in this way. What my analysis offers, I contend, is a focus on the primary descent-ascent dynamic within which that preaching operates.

43. *agon.* 25.27. It is unclear whom Augustine has in mind here. It may be Apelles who "said that Christ did not bring down his flesh from heaven, but took it from the elements of the world and that he returned it to the world when he rose without flesh and ascended into heaven" (*haer.* 23). Hombert agrees with this and traces the anti-gnostic exegesis of John 3:13 to Tertullian's anti-Apellian polemic ("L'Exégèse Augustinienne," 338–339). Focusing on the phrase "his body did not descend from heaven," Tarsicius J. van Bavel, believes the hypothetical adversaries to be Apollinarians. See van Bavel, *Recherches sur la christologie de saint Augustin* (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1954), 35. Both of these suppositions seem probable. It is likely, I think, that Augustine, knowing of the anti-Apellian use of the verse as in Tertullian, finds it useful for refuting Apollinaris. Drobner's contention that the heretics are "Arians" seems unlikely (though not impossible) given the emphasis in the passage on the earthly source of the physical body rather than the nature of the one who assumes the body (*Person-Exegese*, 112).

44. *agon.* 25.27. For the significance of vestment imagery in Augustine's Christology, see van Bavel, *Recherches*, 35.

humanity seems to be an accident of the divinity that is the primary subject here.[45]

The significance of this passage for my argument is the way that Augustine maintains the singular grammatical subject of Christ and finds a way to speak of humanity's inclusion in the predication of that subject. In line with this, Augustine uses this same sartorial image for union in the subject of Christ in our initial passage from *en. Ps.* 122.1. After affirming that we must unite ourselves to the body of the *unus Christus*, Augustine describes how "the head descends, and he ascends with his body, clothed in his church (*vestitus ecclesiam suam*)."[46] The church, too, can be understood as the vestment of the ascending Christ. But Augustine makes the unity more explicit in this case than he does in the earlier text from *agon.* "Even with us, Christ is alone (*et nobiscum solus est*), and therefore he is *unus* and always *unus*."[47] As members of the body of the one Christ, we are brought into the single grammatical subject such that we can share his ascent.[48]

This affirmation of the church's unity with Christ derives both from the initial prosopological question of *de quo loquitur* and from the pro-Nicene Christology that Augustine evinces in *agon.* and other early works, as well as in more explicit anti-"Arian" texts in his later career. For instance, in his post-debate response to Maximinus, Augustine deploys John 3:13 in order to demonstrate how one ought to understand the one person but diverse substances of Christ in scriptural predication: "If you pay attention to the distinction of substances, the Son of God came down from heaven, the Son of Man was crucified; if you pay attention to the unity of the person, both the Son of Man came down from heaven and the Son of God was

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45. See also, *s.* 263A. For a discussion of the "substantive attributive" use of *habitus* and *persona*, see Drobner, *Person-Exegese*, 112–113.

46. *en. Ps.* 122.1.

47. *en. Ps.* 122.1.

48. This is an extension of the *communicatio idiomatum* that characterizes the relationship between humanity and divinity in Christ. The *communicatio* is what allows for shared predication between the Son of God and the Son of Man, or rather, for double predication of the single subject. This is a favorite theme of van Bavel, for whom John 3:13 is the *locus classicus* for such predication exchange (*Recherches*, 58–81). I am leery of van Bavel's insistence on describing this unity as *hypostatic*, an adjective that seems to telegraph too much into Augustine's grammatical mode of exegesis and preaching here. Madec offers an appropriately cautious way of endorsing van Bavel's insight: "Il y a donc, dans l'esprit d'Augustin, une sorte d''union hypostatique' entre le Christ et l'Église; une 'incarnation ecclésiale'" (Madec, *Le Christ*, 155). See also Borgomeo, *L'Église de ce temps*, 211–218.

crucified."[49] This late work (428) reflects a formula for speaking of unity and diversity in the incarnate Word that Augustine had not discovered by the time of our sermons. The principles of unity and distinction in the singular Christ, though, are quite close. Our sermon series and its reflections on ecclesial unity within the body of the *unus homo* represent a key moment in Augustine's developing Christology. Augustine lacks the precision of the *una persona*, but his perennial emphasis on the singular grammatical subject, both of Christ the incarnate God and Christ as head and body, suggests consistency at the level of theological emphasis, if not at that of terminology.

There are instructive precedents for this reading of John 3:13 in two of Augustine's major Latin pro-Nicene influences, Hilary and Ambrose. In his tractate on Psalm 2, Hilary parses the identifications of the "Lord," "his anointed," and "the one in Heaven." For Hilary, a prosopological reading demonstrates both the distinction and the unity of the Father and Son who are referenced in the distinct names; David, Hilary tells us, signifies the Father and Son "*sub personae distinctione.*"[50] But if the Son is the Lord and "the one in heaven" is the Father, does that mean that Christ at some point ceased to be in heaven, that is, stopped being divine and equal to the Father? Hilary denies that the Son was ever "not always in heaven [since] he himself testifies concerning himself" in John 3:13:

> Therefore he is not absent from heaven because when he had descended from heaven, remaining and speaking as the Son of Man, he was nevertheless, when he spoke these things, in heaven. Indeed the Son of Man descended, but through the power of his nature (*per naturae virtute*) the Son of God was not absent from whence he had descended. Nor did he assume himself from that which he had been before, when he was born as a man. Nor being made the Son of Man did he cease being the Son of God, but he was still the Son of God as the Son of Man so that descending as Son of God from heaven through his own power (*per uirtutis suae*) the Son of Man was likewise in heaven.[51]

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49. *c. Max.* 2.20.3.

50. Hilary, *tr. s. Ps.* 2.12.

51. Hilary, *tr. s. Ps.* 2.11.

In the midst of his prosopological exegesis of Psalm 2, then, Hilary uses John 3:13 to highlight the eternal divinity of the Son and its consistency with his incarnation and assumption of humanity. This Christology is thus tied to a pro-Nicene trinitarian theology. The key for Hilary is the way in which the incarnation does not entail a loss of the Son's divinity. John 3:13 illustrates this for Hilary because it predicates "in heaven" of the "Son of Man," establishing the single subject of Christ as capable of double predication because the Son of Man and Son of God are the same subject.

In addition to Hilary, a similar precedent appears in Ambrose's *On the Faith* (*fid.*). The bishop of Milan wants to refute those who would read John 6:58—"As the living Father has sent me and I live by the Father, so he that eats me lives also by me"—as evidence for subordination in the Godhead due to the Son lacking life in himself but deriving it solely from the Father's sending. Ambrose cites John 3:13 as evidence of how one should understand this sending, that is, as predicated of the Son of Man, Christ's humanity, not his divinity: "If he was sent and descended as Son of Man, so as Son of Man he lives by the Father."[52] Ambrose is not concerned to highlight the singular subject but to clarify the distinction in predication in a way that maintains the full divinity of the incarnate Son. Taken in conjunction with Hilary, though, this passage bears witness to a shared pro-Nicene reading of John 3:13 that parses the complex identity of the one Christ. It is this reading of John 3:13 that Augustine exploits in a unique ecclesiological way against the Donatists.

In *en. Ps.* 122.1, then, Augustine describes how the church as the body of Christ is brought into the unity of the *unus Christus* so as to share in his self-predicated ascent. It is a grammatical argument that derives from the prosopological question not of *quis loquitur* but of *de quo loquitur*. However, because the object is the reflexive subject, Augustine is able to use this question to describe how the church is incorporated into the unitive grammatical subject of the single ascending Christ. I turn now to show how Augustine deploys this verse throughout our sermon series, adding a pro-Nicene epistemological dimension to the incorporation of the church into the grammatical subject of Christ.

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52. Ambrose, *fid.* 4.10.126.

From Grammar to Revelation

Following Augustine's use of John 3:13 through the rest of our sermon series will lead from grammar to revelation, from the *way* in which Augustine discusses our unity with Christ to the *purpose* of that unity. Augustine's anti-Donatist understanding of the church as united in the body of Christ is founded upon the pro-Nicene principle of Christ's mediating revelation of the Father and, therefore, of his own divinity. For Augustine, by incorporation into the body of Christ, we come to see and to know the Father through the Son, his spoken Word. When the Donatists forsake the unity of the church, they forsake the vision of God that comes only through participation in Christ's body. First, though, I must return to *trin.* 1 to establish Augustine's pro-Nicene Christological[53] epistemology, which I will later show to be at work in his anti-Donatist exegesis of John 3:13.

1 Corinthians 15:24 and the Christological Epistemology of *De Trinitate* 1

In the "new canon" Augustine scholarship, one perennial theme in the work of Barnes, Ayres, and others has been the way in which our ascent to contemplation of the Trinity is not so much a (neo-)Platonic philosophical exercise but the constitutive element of Christian salvation brought about by the incarnation of Christ and the insinuation of the Spirit.[54] This same trinitarian concern, I contend, governs the soteriological element of

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53. "Christological" here should not be read as opposed to "trinitarian," since, as I will show, what Christ ultimately reveals is the Father. As Gioia notes, "The mediation of Christ has a Trinitarian dimension because the incarnation is not simply the union of divine nature and human nature, but the personal action of the Son of the Father through which he unites human nature to himself. He is the mediator not simply because he is God and man, but because he is the Son and the Logos of the Father who has become man" (*Theological Epistemology*, 89). This trinitarian Christology characterizes Augustine's preaching on the body of Christ in these sermons. For the anti-Homoian context of this concern in Augustine's trinitarian thought of this period, see Michel Barnes, "Exegesis and Polemic in Augustine's *De Trinitate* I," *AugStud* 30, no. 1 (1999): 43–49.

54. In addition to Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity* (esp. chap. 6, "A Christological Epistemology"), three other works influence this section. Ayres, "The Christological Context of De Trinitate XIII: Towards Relocating Boks VIII–XV," *AugStud* 29, no. 1 (1998): 111–139, argues that the move from *scientia* to *sapientia* is effected *within* the double-natured Christ through "the Christological 'drama' of redemption and participation in the Body of Christ" (119). I agree with Ayres and advance his reading, grounded primarily in *trin.* itself, as also the dominant motif of the anti-Donatist *Christus totus* of these sermons. Michel Barnes, "The Visible Christ and the Invisible Trinity: Mt. 5:8 in Augustine's Trinitarian Theology

Augustine's anti-Donatist preaching on the *totus Christus* in these sermons. This claim receives more credence in light of the chronological correlation between these sermons and *trin.* 1.[55] I turn once again to the latter work to unpack the epistemological concerns that lay behind Augustine's understanding of John 3:13.

Whereas in the previous chapter I highlighted Augustine's use of Philippians 2:6–7 and Matthew 5:8, here I want to look at his exegesis of 1 Corinthians 15:24, the Son's handing over of the kingdom to the Father. Though this verse has a "modalist" reading in mid-fourth-century Greek theology, associated most with Marcellus of Ancyra, Augustine is refuting a Homoian reading of the text that would see the Son's handing over of the kingdom as evidence of his subordination to the Father. Augustine's pro-Nicene reading interprets the handing over of the kingdom as the Son leading us to the "face-to-face" vision of God, to "contemplation of God and the Father" when "the Father will be made known by the Son."[56] Lest anyone understand this to mean that only the Father is seen as God, Augustine makes it clear that this "face-to-face" vision of God includes not only the Father but also the Son in his divinity, as he is equal to the Father. This is the significance of John 14:9 and 10:30, which Augustine introduces in the following paragraph: "Whether we hear, 'Show us the Son,' or we hear, 'Show us the Father,' it means the same thing because neither can be shown without the other."[57]

This sight is the culmination of Christian salvation, the promise that is the hope of our faith: "Contemplation is surely the reward for faith, for which reward our hearts are cleansed by faith."[58] That the pure of

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of 400," *Modern Theology* 19, no. 3 (2003): 329–355, situates this same Christological epistemology in Augustine's anti-Homoian polemic at the beginning of his writing of *trin.* 1 around 400. This anti-Homoian explication of the *visio Dei* is, I believe, still on Augustine's mind, even as he argues against the Donatists. Third, I follow Goulven Madec in rejecting du Roy's overemphasis on Platonic epistemology: "S'il reconnaît une prévenance de la Providence à son égard dans la succession de ses découvertes du néoplatonisme et de la grâce, ce n'est pas pour justifier une théorie selon laquelle la connaissance de la Trinité est possible sans le Verbe incarné, c'est pour insister sur le fait qu'il a découvert, avec la grâce de Dieu, les insuffisances et les dangers du néoplatonisme" (*Le Christ*, 42–43).

55. For the dating of *trin.* 1, see p. 23.

56. *trin.* 1.8.16.

57. *trin.* 1.8.17. Further, lest anyone think that this concern for the Father/Son relationship denotes a binitarian theology, Augustine turns to the Spirit's inclusion in this unity in the subsequent paragraph.

58. *trin.* 1.8.17.

heart will see God (Matt 5:8) is for Augustine a summary statement of his soteriology, as I discussed in Chapter 1. The key issue is how our hearts are purified and therefore brought to see God. There are two correlative answers: through faith and through Christ. Throughout *trin*. 1, Augustine works with a distinction between faith and sight. At times the two seem mutually opposed, for faith is in things unseen and is therefore appropriate only in this life, after which it will be replaced by sight. While this is true, Augustine makes clear that faith is not simply the opposite of sight but the preparation for it. Through faith we come to sight because through the exercise of faith our minds are purified and trained to see properly.

Moreover, this movement through faith to sight takes place within and through Christ.[59] This is the thrust of the remaining parts of *trin*. 1. Having established that the Son will lead us to sight of the Father, and clarifying that sight of the Father is inseparable from sight of the Son (and Spirit) in his divinity, Augustine clarifies how that movement takes place. The incarnation is a revelation of God, but not in the sense that by seeing the incarnate Christ, we see his divinity. Augustine denies this as a way to undercut Homoian claims that the visibility of Christ signifies his lack of "true" divinity.[60] No, the visibility of Christ is not his divinity, the *forma dei*, but it is the form of a slave, the *forma serui*, the Son of Man. In his divinity, Christ remains the Son of God whose form is equal to the Father and equally invisible. Rather, the incarnation is a revelation of God in that we are led through the flesh of Christ to his divinity.

This dynamic is revealed in a proper reading of scripture, particularly in those passages that imply the inferiority of the Son to the Father. The humanity of Christ points beyond itself to the one who is truly to be worshiped. Sometimes it explicitly points toward the Father as greater than the Son, but Augustine clarifies the significance of such redirection of our noetic attention: "When he refers the attention of the faithful to the Father by saying, 'He does not believe in me, but in him who sent me,' he of course did not wish to separate himself from the Father, that is, from him who sent him, but he did this so that we might so believe in him as in the Father to whom he is equal."[61] Through a proper reading of scripture,

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59. This theme of the Son's revelatory nature/function has been a hallmark of Augustine's trinitarian theology since the early 390s, when Word as "Image" dominated his anti-Manichaean polemic. See Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 53–54.

60. For the polemical context, see Barnes, "The Visible Christ," 331.

61. *trin*. 1.12.27.

Christians who do not physically see Christ share in the same dynamic of sight that the apostles had of the incarnate Christ. We encounter Christ in the flesh in scripture. Faith in this same fleshy Christ purifies our hearts that we might look beyond the flesh to the invisible divinity that is both Father and Son. The Son "took up the creature in which he would appear to human eyes, and would thus cleanse our hearts by faith to contemplate him as equal to the Father. . . . By bringing us back to his Godhead he lifts up the hearts of men, on account of which raising up he descended."[62] The incarnation is a theophany not because we see the Son in the form of his divinity but because it is the means by which the Son purifies our hearts, leading us from his flesh to his divinity through faith. This is why post-ascension Christians are at no disadvantage for having not seen Christ with their bodily eyes. Scripture, when properly understood, serves the same function, pointing to the flesh that points to the divinity.

More important, though, this movement is not the work of the human senses or the human mind; it is the work of God upon our mind. The Son leads us to contemplation of the Father, that is, of the divinity of the invisible God who is Father, Son, and Spirit. This soteriological work lies behind Augustine's understanding of the church as the body of Christ. Incorporation into the *Christus totus*, into that single grammatical subject, into the *unus homo*, effects this purification of the heart and movement through faith to sight. Augustine's condemnation of the Donatists in these sermons cannot be appreciated without understanding what he believes the Donatists are separating from or fighting against. This Christological epistemology is especially central to his reading of John 3:13 in these sermons.

The Epistemological Reading of John 3:13

In our summary passage of *en. Ps.* 122.1, Augustine cites John 3:13 to demonstrate the necessary unity of the church in the body of Christ with whom we ascend as *unus homo*. In unpacking this text, I earlier highlighted the grammatical characteristic of this unity—both of the divinity and humanity of Christ and of the church with the one Christ by way of his assumed humanity—rooted in the practice of prosopological exegesis. Augustine cites John 3:13 two other times in our sermons series, and in these instances

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62. *trin.* 1.12.27.

he connects the grammatical unity of the church in the singular subject of Christ to the epistemological concerns of *trin.* 1. I turn now to these two passages to demonstrate the way in which the Word speaks himself to us through the joining of the church to his body that we might come to sight of the Father. The Donatists forsake this Christological epistemology by separating from the body of Christ that is the church.

In *Io. ev. tr.* 14.7, Augustine reads John 3:13 along with John 3:31–32: "The one who comes from heaven is above all; and he bears witness to what he has seen and heard, and no one accepts his testimony." This one who is from heaven and above all is the Son who is the only one who has ascended to heaven. Unlike the summary passage of *en. Ps.* 122.1, Augustine makes no explicit connection here to the life of the church, or even to the *Christus totus* in which the members of the body of Christ ascend. Following his citation of John 3:13 and John 3:31–32, he focuses instead on puzzling out the relationship between Father and Son:

> For the Son of God himself also has a Father. He has a Father and he listens to his Father. And what is it that he hears from the Father? Who will explain it? When will my tongue, when will my heart be able to do so, either my heart to understand or my tongue to profess what the Son has heard from the Father? Perhaps the Son heard the Father's Word? On the contrary, the Son is the Father's Word. You see how every human attempt is exhausted. You see how every conjecture of our heart, every thought of a darkened mind, will fail.[63]

Augustine then embarks upon a meditation on the difference between human thought and speech, on the one hand, and the nature of divine self-knowledge on the other. He concludes, though, that in acknowledging the incarnation of the Word, we realize that "the Son spoke to us, not his own word, but the Word of the Father; he who spoke the Word of the Father wished to speak himself to us."[64] Here the significance of John 3:13 in light of John 3:31–32 is the revelatory descent of the one who ascends to yet is always in heaven. This revelation manifests the eternal relationship between Father and Son. For Augustine, a Christological epistemology always has a trinitarian dynamic. What we encounter in Christ is always

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63. *Io. ev. tr.* 14.7.

64. *Io. ev. tr.* 14.7.

the Father's Word, the Son. To be led by Christ to his own divinity is also to be led from the Son to the Father.[65]

Moreover, the prosopological concern that I identified in the summary passage of *en. Ps.* 122.1 is also evident in this passage. In describing the mediating revelatory work of the Son, Augustine highlights the reflexive character of the Word speaking himself to us. The *quis loquitur* and the *de quo loquitur* are united in the incarnation of the Word, just as they are in Christ's self-predication in John 3:13. This suggests that the dynamic I described in *en. Ps.* 122.1, whereby the church ascends with Christ through incorporation into his singular reflexive subject, is also the process whereby we "hear" the Word speak himself. This self-speaking is the ecclesial mechanism for the Christological epistemology that Augustine describes in his reading of 1 Corinthians 15:24 in *trin.* 1.

To verify this connection between the ecclesiological and the epistemological readings of John 3:13, I turn now to Augustine's other use of that verse in our sermon series. In *Io. ev. tr.* 12, Augustine takes as his text the "second birth" discussion of John 3:6–21. Midway through the sermon, he exercises his audience as to what Jesus means by "things of earth" and "things of heaven" (John 3:12). For Augustine, the passage highlights the problem of human knowledge: humans do not think properly concerning the things of this world, so how can they understand heavenly things, namely "that human beings can be reborn through the Spirit?"[66] Though he does not use the terms here, Augustine is making a distinction parallel to the later *scientia/sapientia* distinction that so colors the epistemology of *trin.*[67] More immediately, the struggle to know heavenly things, given our ignorance of earthly things, evokes the material/spiritual distinction that lies at the heart of Augustine's moral epistemology that I explored in the previous chapter.

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65. Moreover, one cannot assume that this epistemological work is only an operation of the Son. As Robert Dodaro has noted, the interpenetration of the triune persons is evident in Augustine's flexibility in assigning "roles" to Son and Spirit. Augustine can affirm just as easily that we are taught by the Spirit and given charity by Christ. See Dodaro, "Augustine on the Roles of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Mediation of Virtues," *AugStud* 41, no. 1 (2010): 161–163. The division of this chapter and the next reflect two significant ways in which Augustine discusses the work of Son and Spirit in these sermons; as I will show, they are not exhaustive and ought not signify too easy of a classification and separation of the work of the divine persons.

66. *Io. ev. tr.* 12.7.

67. Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society*, 147–181, is helpful for clarifying the connection between Augustine's Christology and his theories of sacrament, example, *scientia*,

To clarify this distinction, Augustine turns to the next verse:

> And it follows: "And no one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven." Behold, he was here and he was in heaven; he was in flesh here, and he was in divinity in heaven. Or rather, he was everywhere in his divinity. Born of a mother but not departing from the Father. Two births of Christ are understood: one divine, another human; one by which we are made, another by which we are remade. . . . But because he received his body from Adam . . . and was going to raise that same body, he spoke of an earthly thing: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it." Yet, he spoke of a heavenly matter when he said, "Unless one is reborn again of water and the Spirit, he will not see the kingdom of God."[68]

Thus Augustine highlights the Christocentric nature of his epistemology. We come to know both earth and heaven, both the incarnate and the eternal Christ, both *scientia* and *sapientia*, through Christ himself, who brings humanity and divinity together. Because of this, Augustine emphasizes both Christ's eternal divinity and his assumed humanity.[69] For Augustine, the key to this verse is that the Son of Man both descends from heaven and is in heaven. Thus Christ's fleshly birth does not negate his eternal generation from the Father but, properly understood, reveals it. Christ's double birth enables the Christian to ascend to contemplation of divinity by way of the flesh, not in spite of it.

So far, this passage corresponds to the epistemological concerns of *trin.* 1 and *Io. ev. tr.* 14.7. As he continues, though, Augustine describes how

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and *sapientia*. In particular, Dodaro agrees in part with Basil Studer, "Zur Christologie Augustins," *Augustinianum* 19, no. 3 (1979): 539–546, in connecting the unity of Christ's person to the unity of his sacrament and example; but Dodaro clarifies that "it is the interrelationship between the two natures in Christ, and not simply their unity in one 'person,' that provides Augustine with an analogy for the relationship between Christ's sacraments and examples" (154 n.33). For his reading of Goulven Madec on this theme, see Dodaro, "A Note on the Leitmotif *Christus, scientia et sapientia nostra* in Goulven Madec's Study of Augustine's Christology," in *Augustin: Philosophe et Prédicateur*, ed. Isabelle Bochet (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 2012): 49–54.

68. *Io. ev. tr.* 12.8.

69. This constant emphasis on Christ's continued divinity in the incarnation ought to be read in the context of the anti-Homoian affirmation of the Son's divine invisibility, discussed above as the polemical context of *trin.* 1.

the Christ who descends in the incarnation is also the Christ who ascends with us to heaven, elucidating the soteriological and ecclesiological nature of the Son's work of revelation. Again quoting John 3:13, Augustine revisits the same problem he raised in the summary passage of *en. Ps.* 122: "So how is it that nobody ascends except the one who descended? Because *unus* descends, *unus* ascends. What about the rest? What must be understood, except that they will be his members so that *unus* ascends?"[70] In his response, Augustine alternates between refuting the objections to Christ's continued divinity in the descent of the incarnation and articulating a positive depiction of our ascent in Christ:

> Do you marvel because he was both here and in heaven? Such did he make his disciples. Hear the apostle Paul saying, "Our company is in heaven" (Phil 3:20). If the man, the apostle Paul, was walking in the flesh on earth while keeping company in heaven, is not the God of heaven and earth able to be both in heaven and on earth?[71]

Augustine closely intertwines his argument for the Word's simultaneous divinity and humanity with his vision of the church that ascends with Christ. After all, Philippians 3:20 can only make sense in light of John 3:13 through Augustine's affirmation of the singular body of Christ that ascends in head and members. And yet, Augustine uses this mystery of the church's ascent in Christ to illustrate the way in which the Word ought to be understood to exist in two "places," or in two natures. The body of Christ that is the church and the body of Christ that is the assumed flesh of the Word are mutually illuminating because it is by the latter that the former has a true existence.

Augustine then turns the image to his polemical use. Here he makes the anti-Donatist character of his interpretation explicit:

> [Our] hope is that he came down so that those who were to ascend through him might be one in him and with him. . . . So this one commends the unity of the church. Woe to those who hate unity and make factions among people! Let them listen to the one who wished to make them one in one for one (*unum in uno ad unum*). . . .

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70. *Io. ev. tr.* 12.8.

71. *Io. ev. tr.* 12.8.

Be in the one (*in uno*), be one thing (*unum*), be one person (*unus*). "Nobody has ascended into heaven but the one who came down from heaven."[72]

The verse that was at first a grammatical puzzle and then a source of revelation and salvation becomes now a warning. This warning turns upon the connection between the *unus* of Christ and the unity of the church. Augustine deftly shifts from expounding our hope in union with the ascending Christ to admonishing those who break from that union by breaking from the unity of the church. It is not merely that the "one (*unus*) commends the unity of the church," but that one effects that unity by making many Christians "one in one for one." This is an exhortation to join the unity of the church that is the unity of the *Christus totus*. This exhortation points beyond simply being one thing, one institution, *unum*, and extols a type of unity that is only possible through the *unus* of Christ. Though Augustine does not use *persona* here, the distinction between *unum* and *unus* suggests a personal union founded upon the singularity of Christ. This exhortation calls the Donatists to participate in the salvation that the incarnate and exalted Christ has effected and is effecting by uniting the disparate members into his one body that they might ascend with him to where he always is.

Augustine's reading of John 3:13 in *Io. ev. tr.* 12.7–9 illustrates the way in which his explicitly anti-Donatist use of the verse ought to be read in light of the more epistemological and trinitarian emphases of *Io. ev. tr.* 14.7. The "ecclesiological," "epistemological," and "soteriological" elements of Augustine's Christology cannot be separated from one another.[73] If one assumes a certain level of self-consistency in Augustine's preaching within these few short months, one sees that the revelation of the Father's Word to us through Christ's incarnation is accomplished in our union with that Word through his body, the church.

In this use of John 3:13, then, Augustine establishes a connection between the unity of divinity and humanity in Christ and the unity of the

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72. *Io. ev. tr.* 12.9.

73. Gioia offers a helpful analysis of the relationship between these different theological foci: "In revelation we are in the presence of God's act of self-manifestation. With soteriology, we look at the way God's self-manifestation actually saves us" (*Theological Epistemology*, 123). In these anti-Donatist sermons, the church as the body of Christ is the locus of both revelation and salvation.

human members within the body of Christ. He moves from defending the continuing divinity of the incarnate Christ to exhorting the Donatists to be united with the true church in that one Christ. Moreover, he does all this through the lens of his Christological epistemology, as defined in *trin.* 1. Christ, through his incarnate divinity, reveals the truth about both earthly and heavenly things, leading us to the spiritual through the material.[74] It is not, though, that we become one as Christ's humanity and divinity are one (never mind for now the question of one *what*). Rather, the oneness of the ecclesial body of Christ is predicated upon the oneness of Christ himself because we are incorporated into that *unus*. And through the unity of that *unus*, we may move from contemplating his humanity to contemplating his divinity.[75] This is one key way in which we ascend with Christ as Christ: to be raised up to heaven means to be raised up to his divinity, the sight of which is itself the ultimate goal of human creation and redemption. It is this pro-Nicene affirmation of epistemological salvation through Christ that Augustine believes the Donatists forsake.

Fleshing Out the Body of Christ

By tracing Augustine's use of John 3:13 in these sermons, and reading those uses in the context of the epistemology of *trin.* 1, I have described the epistemological character of our union with Christ in his body, the church. Incorporation into the single grammatical subject of Christ allows us to participate in the ascent of the one who first descended from heaven. For Augustine this means that, by sharing in the body of Christ, Christians come to know Christ in his divinity, and therefore come to know the entire Trinity. The movement from faith to sight and the movement from *scientia* to *sapientia* are both accomplished in and through Christ's body, the church.

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74. "The epistemological hiatus between what is temporal and what is eternal, between what is the object of faith and what is the object of contemplation, is overcome only in and by Christ" (Gioia, *Theological Epistemology*, 69). In contrast, van Bavel investigates Augustine's Christological epistemology primarily by engaging the scholastic question of the incarnate Christ's own vision of God. Most of van Bavel's insights ought to be applied to the church through the *commucatio idiomatum* of our union with Christ's body. See van Bavel, *Recherches*, 164ff.

75. It should be noted that the true vision of God, true *sapientia*, is eschatological, only anticipated and approached in this life by faith. Yet the hope of that faith is so sure that throughout these sermons such wisdom is seen as in some way achieved through incorporation into the body of Christ. See Gioia, *Theological Epistemology*, 83.

As I discussed above, Augustine's Latin pro-Nicene precedents for reading John 3:13—Ambrose and Hilary—both emphasize the continued divinity of the incarnate Christ and the united though complex grammatical subject of the Son of Man and the Son of God. Further, I showed how, for both Hilary and Ambrose, the Christological use of John 3:13 is closely tied to an anti-monarchial, trinitarian emphasis on the distinction between Son and Father. What I did not show in these pre-Augustinian texts, though, is a clear precedent for the epistemological character of that pro-Nicene Christology. To trace the roots of this aspect of Augustine's preaching on the *Christus totus* against the Donatists, I return to my initial summary text of *en. Ps.* 122.1 to examine Colossians 3:1–4 and Acts 9:4, the two citations that accompany and illuminate John 3:13.

In *en. Ps.* 122.1, Augustine uses Acts 9:4 and Colossians 3:1–4 to illustrate his assertion that the church is incorporated into the grammatical subject of the ascending Christ of John 3:13. In Acts 9:4, Augustine hears the voice of the risen Christ proclaiming his continued identity with his sojourning body:

> And in heaven [Christ] is suffering no persecution, no malice, and no slander, all of which he deigned to endure on our behalf on this earth. However, suffering with his body laboring on earth, he said, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" No one was touching him, but he cried out from heaven that he himself was suffering persecution![76]

Augustine often uses Acts 9:4 to demonstrate this unity of Christ the head with Christ the body, whose members suffer on earth.[77] In this particular instance, Acts 9:4 serves as an illustration for Augustine's reading of John 3:13. It demonstrates the way in which, even after his ascension, Christ speaks so as to join to himself his members on earth. Christ's own self-predication affirms that he as head and we as members of his body make a single grammatical subject.

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76. *en Ps.* 122.1.

77. See, *inter multa alia, Io. ev. tr.* 28.1, 31.10; *en. Ps.* 26.2.11, 30.2.1.3, 32.2.1.2, 37.6; *s.* 263A; *civ. Dei* 17.9; *trin.* 15.19. For a more summary account of Acts 9:4 in *en. Ps.*, see Benedict Geuven, " 'Saul, Saul, Why Are You Persecuting Me?': Augustine's Use of Acts 9:4 in his *Enarrationes in Psalmos,*" *Downside Review* 127, no. 449 (2009): 261–268.

Augustine proves the correlative of Christ's presence with us on earth—that is, our presence with him in heaven—by adding Colossians 3:1–4 to this constellation of texts.[78] Paul's affirmation that we "have risen with Christ" and that our "life is hidden with Christ in God" proves, for Augustine, that Christ "is down here by the compassion of charity, and we are on high by the hope of charity. . . . But because our hope is certain, even though it is for the future, this is said about us as though it were completed."[79] Again, grammar bears the theological significance. Though our bodily rising with Christ is a future promise, not achieved until the eschaton, Paul speaks of it in the present tense. Our union with Christ in this life, while we still toil in this world, is such that our promised ascent to and in Christ can be predicated with confidence as a fait accompli.

Thus this summary account of the *Christus totus* as the descending and ascending Christ in *en. Ps.* 122.1 joins John 3:13 to Colossians 3:1–4 and Acts 9:4 in order to parse our common grammatical identity with Christ. Examining Augustine's wider use of Colossians 3:1–4 and Acts 9:4 in our sermon series will add three components to my argument. First, both passages have Latin pro-Nicene precedents for reading them epistemologically. Whereas the Latin pro-Nicene readings of John 3:13 are primarily about the unity of Christ in his humanity and divinity, these two texts provide the epistemological emphasis that Augustine unites to the Christological reading of John 3:13. Augustine's innovation in reading John 3:13 is to combine it with the epistemological emphasis of these other texts to demonstrate the significance of our union with the body of Christ.

Second, Augustine's reading of Colossians 3:1–4 further connects the epistemological ascent of the church through the body of Christ to the moral epistemology of Chapter 1 by accentuating the movement from the material to the spiritual. Unpacking this dynamic will tie Augustine's understanding of the epistemological efficacy of union with the body of Christ more closely to that moral epistemology, demonstrating that the reformation of the mind is accomplished through that ecclesial unity.

Finally, Acts 9:4 emphasizes the moral component of our union in Christ's body by depicting the necessary reformation of desire and

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78. This is not the only place this particular constellation appears. See *s.* 263A and the discussions of it in Drobner, *Person-Exegese,* 112–113, 256–257. I take the term "constellation" from Michel Barnes. See esp. "The Visible Christ," 332, 336.

79. *en. Ps.* 122.1. The elephant in the room with this quote is what is meant by charity and how it effects this union. I will discuss this in the next chapter.

cultivation of humility and love that accompany and equip the intellectual ascent. Here Augustine's most explicit condemnation of the Donatists arises because it is their pride and lack of love that prevent them from joining the ascending body. Thus, through Colossians 3:1–4 and Acts 9:4, I will show that Augustine's moral epistemology—including the reorientation of the mind to spiritual truths and the reformation of desire through love and humility—is accomplished through the unity of the body of Christ in which we ascend.

Colossians 3:1–4: The Mind Risen with Christ

Colossians 3:1–4, the text that Augustine uses in the summary passage of *en. Ps.* 122.1 to prove our presence in heaven with the risen Christ, does not show up often in the rest of our sermon series. In his wider corpus, however, Augustine develops a reading of Colossians 3 that is connected to John 20:17 and the question of what it means to "touch" the Christ who has "not yet risen to the Father." Augustine's reading of the text in this way has a significant precedent in Ambrose. Taken together, Ambrose's and Augustine's readings of Colossians 3 with John 20:17 suggest a pro-Nicene epistemological concern for how we come to know Christ's true divinity. Moreover, the wider tradition of fourth-century Latin interpretation uses Colossians 3:1–4 to highlight the movement of the mind and heart from the material to the spiritual, or from the earthly to the heavenly. This broader concern, which is at the heart of the moral epistemology I discussed in Chapter 1, is the exegetical background for both Ambrose's and Augustine's understanding of how we come to know the Father through the Son's body.

Colossians 3:1–4 is well known by Latin "anti-Arian" authors of the fourth century,[80] including Gaudentius of Brescia,[81] Chromatius of Aquileia,[82] Maximus of Turin,[83] Ambrose,[84] and Ambrosiaster. This last

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80. For a Homoian use of Col 3, see *col. Max.* 15.2, where Maximinus emphasizes Christ's presence at the "right hand of God," in a catena of "right hand" texts including Col 3:1–4, Ps 109:1, Heb 1:3, and Matt 26:64. For Maximinus, these texts point to the worship due Christ as "the God of every creature" but also to the fact that "the Father gave him this" honor.

81. Gaudentius, *tr.* 18.14; 21.4.

82. Chromatius, *s.* 20 (fragment), lines 16–18.

83. Maximus, *s.* 35.1.

84. Ambrose, *off.* 1.36.184; *virg.* 13.82.

author, in his Pauline commentaries, offers a typical interpretation of Colossians 3:1:

> [Paul] asserts that they have been resurrected with Christ in baptism, who think about heaven, where Christ is seated, where God the Father has given his right hand to his Son so that he may reign and judge. ... [Paul] exhorts us to seek the dwelling places of the lofty heavens that are eternal, by separating from all those things that are in the firmament or under it. For whoever occupies himself with these superstitions suffers an impediment. For he will not be able to transcend these things to which he lowers himself as if they were his lords.[85]

Ambrosiaster evinces two main themes that are indicative of fourth-century Latin interpretations of Colossians 3:1–4. First, he defines "risen with Christ" as the mind's ascent to contemplation of heavenly things. Second, he draws a distinction between knowledge of this world and knowledge of the divine world, a key component of Augustine's moral epistemology and the training of the mind to discern between the two. Both of these themes consistently appear throughout Augustine's preaching on the body of Christ in his sermons against the Donatists.

Ambrose develops a reading of Colossians 3:1–4 in conjunction with John 20:17, in which Jesus tells Mary not to touch him because he has not yet ascended to the Father. In doing so, he adds a trinitarian dynamic to the noetic ascent described by the earlier Latin authors. In his commentary on Luke, Ambrose puzzles over how Christ can claim not to have ascended to the Father when, even in descending, he did not leave the Father:

> You [Christ] descended to us that we might see you with our eyes and minds, that we might believe in you. Therefore, you have also ascended from us, that we may follow with our minds, you whom we cannot see with our eyes. You ascended from the Apostles to whom you said, "Whoever sees me sees the Father." So John, when he sought you, knew he sought you with the Father, and found you there, and therefore said, "And the Word was with God." You also

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85. Ambrosiaster, *comm.* Col 3.1–2.

ascended for Paul, who, not content only to follow you, taught us also how we might follow you and where we might find you.[86]

Ambrose then recites Colossians 3:1–2 as Paul's instructions on how to follow the ascending Christ to the Father. To "touch Christ" is to touch him in his divinity, to seek what is above, not merely what is on earth, that is, the flesh of his humanity.

Augustine seems to know this Ambrosian reading well because he makes much the same move in *trin.* 4.3.6. Reading Colossians 3:1–4 and John 10:17 together, as Ambrose did, Augustine declares that "not to touch Christ until he has ascended to the Father means not to think carnally about Christ."[87] Both Ambrose and Augustine, then, read John 20:17 with Colossians 3 to connect Christ's rising "to the Father" to our own rising with Christ. To rise with Christ is to touch him properly, that is, in his divinity. It is an epistemological touch that brings us to knowledge of Christ as he rises to where he always is, with his Father, in his divinity.

John 20:17 also shows up within our anti-Donatist sermon series, though without Colossians 3. Augustine introduces his third homily on 1 John by ruminating on what it means for John to call us "children" (1 John 2:18). We are children growing up according to our wills (*in voluntate*),[88] and we grow up by drinking milk that we might mature to solid food: "Our milk is the humble Christ; our food is the very same Christ, equal to the Father. He nurses you with milk so that he may feed you with bread, for to touch Jesus spiritually with the heart is to understand that he is equal to the Father."[89] This leads Augustine to John 20:17, explaining that Christ invites Mary to a more spiritual touching: "A spiritual touch comes from a pure heart. He touches Christ from a pure heart who understands that he is coequal with the Father. But he who does not yet understand the divinity of Christ comes as far as his flesh, but he does not come as far as his divinity."[90] Not to touch Christ spiritually is not to understand that whoever sees the Son sees the Father (John 14:9).

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86. *in Luc.* 10.159.

87. *trin.* 4.3.6. See the discussion of John 20:17 at *trin.* 1.9.18, and the analysis of this theme of spiritual touching in Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 152–154. For the way this reading of John 20:17 and Col 3:1 fits into Augustine's theory of sacrament, see Dodaro, *Christ and the Just Society*, 153.

88. *ep. Io.* 3.1.

89. *ep. Io.* 3.1.

90. *ep. Io.* 3.2.

This epistemological sense of rising with Christ lies behind Augustine's use of Colossians 3 along with John 3:13 and Acts 9:4 in our summary *Christus totus* passage from *en. Ps.* 122.1. The other appearance of Colossians 3:1–4 in our sermon series reinforces this notion of an epistemological ascent with Christ while accentuating the ecclesiological dimension of our union with Christ through his body. At the end of his exposition of Ps 121, preached less than a week prior to our summary passage of *en. Ps.* 122.1, Augustine highlights the way in which love is the source of strength in the heavenly city of Jerusalem: "And because charity itself kills what we were so that we might be what we were not, love effects in us a kind of death."[91] Augustine tells us that this is the sort of death that Paul refers to in Colossians 3:3: "You are dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God." In this passage, Colossians 3:3 does not receive extended reflection on its own. Rather, Augustine references it in a series of texts—including Song of Songs 8:6 and Galatians 6:14—through which he interprets Psalm 121:7, "May peace reign in your strength." Throughout this entire Psalm of Ascent, Augustine works to distinguish between this world in which we sojourn and the heavenly Jerusalem to which we are ascending in Christ. To be dead yet alive with Christ in God, then, is to have turned away from this world and to have begun one's ascent to God and the heavenly Jerusalem. Given the ecclesiological significance of Jerusalem that I elucidated in the previous chapter, the epistemological ascent in the body of Christ is part of how the church comes to participate in the eternal city that is the foundation of the sojourning church militant in this world.

Colossians 3:1–4 functions for Augustine as an exhortation to turn one's heart and mind from this world to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the true *Idipsum* that is God. More than this, though, in his reading of the *Christus totus* in these Psalms of Ascent, Augustine continually describes how the retraining of the heart and mind are accomplished through and in the body of Christ. This seeking of "things that are above, where Christ is" is made possible because our "life is hidden in Christ." We move through the material to the spiritual by way of the body of Christ into which we are incorporated, just as the first apostles were challenged to move from the body of the incarnate Christ to his divinity, coequal with the Father. This intellectual movement cannot be accomplished, however,

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91. *en. Ps.* 121.12. For more on *en. Ps.* 121 and the ecclesiological significance of Jerusalem, see Chapter 1, pp. 36–40, 48–49 and Chapter 3, pp. 102–107.

without the reformation of desire. To identify how this moral reformation is also accomplished in the body of Christ that is the church, I now turn to Acts 9:4.

Acts 9:4: Learning to Love Christ's Body

Acts 9:4 is the third text that Augustine reads with John 3:13 and Colossians 3:1–4 in the summary passage from *en. Ps.* 122.1. Whereas Colossians 3 posits our rising with Christ as already achieved, Acts 9:4 describes Christ's continued presence on earth in his body, the church. In tracing the history of exegesis on this verse as well as Augustine's own use, three points will arise that advance our understanding of the unity of the church in the body of Christ that ascends to sight of the Father. First, pre-Augustinian exegesis of Acts 9:4 includes only a limited precedent for the Christ-church identification. But there is an intriguing Latin pro-Nicene tradition of reading the verse epistemologically or theophanically. Second, with Acts 9:4, Augustine emphasizes the reformation of desire that constitutes the moral aspect of the moral epistemology I described in the previous chapter and which is effected through unity with the body of Christ. Here that reformation of desire is manifest in the cultivation of humility and love that Augustine condemns the Donatists for lacking. Humility functions for Augustine as both the prerequisite to and consequence of participation in the unity of the body of Christ. Third, Augustine connects this cultivation of love within the body to the cultivation of our love for God and Christ. In showing how we move from love of neighbor to love of God, Augustine parallels the movement of the mind from the flesh of Christ to his divinity. Both are part of a single ascent that is accomplished only in and through Christ's body, the church.

Augustine's interpretation of Acts 9:4 in the summary passage of *en. Ps.* 122.1 represents his most common way of reading the verse, that is, as demonstrating the identification of the risen Christ with his suffering body on earth. Surprisingly, there is no easily identifiable Latin precedent for this way of reading Acts 9:4. There is one possible Donatist precedent in the letters of Petilian. As one would expect, Petilian uses this verse to condemn the Catholics for persecuting Christ by persecuting the Donatists: "Calculate all the deaths of the saints, and so many times have you killed Christ."[92] It is significant, though, that Petilian specifically refers to the

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92. Quoted in *c. litt. Pet.* 2.20.44.

killing of Christ's priests, reading Acts 9:4 along with 1 Chronicles 16:22, "Touch not my anointed ones [*meos christos*]." Petilian plays on the identification of the one *Christus* with the many *christos*. For Petilian, the anointed priest is most closely associated with Christ.[93] There is no sustained reflection on the church itself as the body of Christ here,[94] although such theology may implicitly lie behind his use of the verse.[95]

Expanding the investigation to the Greek sources, one finds a few more suggestive precedents for the Christological/ecclesiological reading. In his commentary on John, Origen claims that "everyone who betrays Jesus's disciples has been reckoned a betrayer of Jesus" on the basis of Acts 9:4.[96] Yet this is the extent of Origen's exploration of the identification between Christ and the church based on the text; there is no sustained reflection on that identification. There is a much more familiar use of the verse in the *de trinitate* ascribed (most likely falsely) to Didymus the Blind. Here the unknown author reads Acts 9:4 as Christ speaking ἐκ προσόπου Ἐκκλησίας, in the person of the church. This signals the first instance of explicitly prosopological exegesis of Acts 9:4.[97] This is, of course, the primary way in which Augustine reads the verse. Yet because of the authorial ambiguity, it is difficult to say whether this text might have indirectly influenced Augustine or, what seems more likely, whether it represents a common trend in fourth-century theology, namely, the adaptation of prosopological exegesis to deal with ambiguous scriptural texts.

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93. Optatus has previously used 1 Chr 16:22 (or its parallel in Ps 104.15) against the Donatist bishop Parmenian. For Optatus, the Donatist claim to ecclesial purity is proven false by their "having stripped divine honors from so many priests," presumably, that is, from priests who have come to them from the Catholic party or from one of the intra-Donatist divisions (*c. Parm*. 4.4.2).

94. Petilian does offer a bit more on Acts 9:4, emphasizing that Paul's blindness only dissapates when the persecutor submits to baptism. Likewise, the argument goes, the persecuting Catholics, who are "blind from false baptism," ought "to be baptized by those whom you persecute" (*c. litt. Pet.* 2.21.47). While this does suggest an ecclesiological dimension to the Donatist reading, it does not represent a precedent for the "body of Christ" reading that Augustine so often deploys against them. At most, it suggests that Acts 9:4 is a disputed text because of its assumed ecclesiological import.

95. For his part, Augustine does not offer an alternative reading of Acts 9:4 in response to Petilian. He is content to dispute whether the Catholics are truly guilty of persecution or whether they are using a proper application of civil authority in the dispute.

96. Origen, *Io.* 1.71. See also 20.136–137.

97. *trin.* 3.3. On the authenticity of this text, see B. Neuschäfer, "Didymus the Blind," in *DECL*, 173–174.

There are also, in both the Latin and Greek sources, uses of the verse that suggest Augustine's epistemological concern. Most significant, Ambrose emphasizes that the light that blinded Paul was the light of Christ, the very light by which he would come to know the one he persecuted:

> Light shown upon Saul on the road, when Christ came to him, and from this the persecutor was made blind by the refulgent light of God. Why then was he blinded, if not because he did not recognize Christ? For if he had recognized the Lord of Light, he would not have lost the light of the eyes. And in the end he received when he recognized.[98]

Ambrose connects the sensory light of Saul's eyes to the ultimate Light of Christ, through whom all things are known. Human perception and knowledge ultimately depend upon a proper recognition of Christ. How much more so is this true when we are brought to knowledge of that Light itself? Here, then, Ambrose evinces the same revelatory concern that Augustine connects to the theme of Christ's identification with his body.[99]

The only other notable pre-Augustinian use of Acts 9:4 is a passage in the Ps-Athanasian *serm. fid.*, possibly ascribable to Marcellus of Ancyra.[100] This author emphasizes the nature of revelation and the inability of created humans to look upon the glory of Christ's divinity. Paul's encounter with Christ and his subsequent blindness are testimonies to the glory of Christ's divine nature.

Thus, in pre-Augustinian exegesis, Acts 9:4 has two major uses. First, it sometimes highlights the relationship between Christ and the church. This appears in Origen and again in "Didymus," and it is possibly present in earlier Donatist theology, based upon its use in Petilian. Other than these instances, this way of reading the text does not seem to gain much traction in the West before Augustine. The second type of reading, though, focuses on the encounter between the human and the divine,

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98. Ambrose, *in Ps.* 39.21.2. A similar use of Acts 9:4 appears in *in Ps.* 118.14.6. The only other use of the verse in Ambrose is from *Abr.* 2.9.61. In this last instance, Ambrose emphasizes the fear that comes upon all who hear God.

99. Hilary, in his one citation of the verse, uses Acts 9:4 to demonstrate the way the anger of God is used to correct and to save (*tr. s. Ps.* 2.21). This is, I believe, a parallel concern to the epistemological use in Ambrose and Augustine, simply with a moral gloss.

100. Ps.-Athanasius, *serm. fid.*, fr. 67. On the authenticity of this text, see Metzler, "Athanasius of Alexandria," in *DECL*, 57.

emphasizing the way in which the glory of the Son's divinity blinds Saul, or the way in which it is only through that very light that Saul, or anyone for that matter, can come to know the Son.

It is unclear what of this tradition Augustine explicitly knows. However, I contend that we may read Augustine's use of Acts 9:4 against the Donatists as a joining of these two trends. Certainly his most typical use of Acts 9:4 demonstrates the head's presence with his body and its members in this world. But when Augustine takes time to unpack the significance of this relationship between head and members, he highlights the soteriological nature of that union. The salvation that comes from participation in the body of Christ is, at least in part, tied to the revelation of the Son's divinity that comes from such participation.

Beyond our sermon series, there are some telling instances where Augustine brings this epistemological concern to the forefront. Significantly, in a sermon delivered near Easter between 400 and 405, Augustine employs Acts 9:4 to explain how our faith differs from that of the apostles. The apostles saw Christ in the flesh, but they did not see the church. We, on the other hand, see the church but not the incarnate Christ. For both the Apostles and later Christians, that which is visible leads to faith in the invisible:

> Just as they saw him and believed about the body, so we see the body and believe about the head. The things seen ought to help us, respectively. The Christ who is seen helps them to believe in the church that will be; the church that is seen helps us to believe that Christ has risen. . . . The whole Christ was made known to them and it was made known to us; but the whole [Christ] was not seen by them, nor is the whole [Christ] seen by us. . . . Nevertheless, none of us lacks Christ. He is complete in all of us.[101]

Paul's encounter with the risen Christ is the ultimate proof of this: "I am in heaven, and you are on earth. Nevertheless, you are persecuting me. You do not touch the head, but you trample my members."[102] Moreover, the ultimate result of Paul's encounter with the head of the body he was persecuting is that "he was illuminated in his heart."[103] Participation in the

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101. *s.* 116.6.

102. *s.* 116.7.

103. *s.* 116.7.

body of Christ is connected to proper sight, either in the physical sense or in the internal eyes of the heart through faith. By emphasizing the blinding and subsequent enlightening of Paul, Augustine ties Christ's identification with his body to the epistemological ascent to God that is at the center of his soteriology.

I return now to our sermon series to see how Augustine deploys Acts 9:4 in these nine months of anti-Donatist preaching. Here the epistemological concern gives way to a moral one, namely, the cultivation of humility and love that is both a prerequisite for and a consequence of our unity with Christ in his body, the church. In his sermon on Psalm 123, preached less than a week after our summary passage from *en. Ps.* 122, Augustine reminds his audience of their identification with Christ:

> We who are many are one because Christ is one, and in Christ the members of Christ are made one with Christ. The head of all these members is in heaven. Although the body is still laboring on earth, it is not cut off from its head. For the head looks after and provides for the body from on high.[104]

For proof, Augustine again recites Christ's interrogation of Saul from Acts 9:4. What is significant in this passage is the context within which Augustine emphasizes this point about Christ's identification with the church. He is trying to clarify why the Psalms speak sometimes in the voice of one person and sometimes in the voice of many. Again, we see the prosopological concern that so characterizes his reading of the Psalms and, with it, his understanding of the grammatical connection between Christ the head and the church his body.

Acts 9:4, therefore, provides an explanation of what constitutes the unity of those voices of the church into one voice. It is not simply that Christ is present with believers on earth; rather, he is present with his believers in such a way that they are united not only to him but to each other as well. This is the reason that Augustine's theology of the church as the body of Christ necessarily negates the possibility of a competing community such as the Donatists. The church united with Christ is the church united also with itself. Christ makes his body one by uniting the many to himself. Those who would refuse to be one with the many also refuse to be

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104. *en. Ps.* 123.1.

one with Christ. The unity of the individual Christian with the risen Christ is indistinguishable from the unity that the church experiences within its diverse members. The prosopological unity of the one ascending singer builds upon the organic unity illustrated in the Pauline body of Christ. Christians are only united to one another inasmuch as they are members of a single body, that is, the single body of the *unus Christus*. To reject that body, to set up a separate communion, is, for Augustine, to separate not only from other Christians but from the one Christ who unites those other Christians to himself.[105]

Augustine next references Acts 9:4 in *en. Ps.* 130. This sermon again focuses on the nature of unity within the body of Christ. This time Augustine highlights the central theme of humility:

> A Psalm ought not be understood as the voice of *unus homo* singing but as the voice of all who are in the body of Christ. And because many are in the body of Christ, so that it is *unus homo* who speaks, they are also one in him who is one.[106]

This seems like a bit of a contradiction: the Psalm is not the voice of *unus homo* because it is the voice of *unus homo*. We may resolve the contradiction by realizing that Augustine is positing a distinction between Christians singing the Psalms of Ascent as their own individual voices and Christians singing the Psalms of Ascent as members of the body of Christ, in which many voices are made one through incorporation into the single voice of Christ. Pride, Augustine argues, prevents this unity in the body, whereas humility effects it. To separate from the body, as Augustine believes the Donatists do, is to desire to sing in one's own voice, refusing to humble oneself to be part of the corporate voice of Christ's body.

With this humility in mind, then, Augustine raises Acts 9:4 not to demonstrate the unity of Christ with his sojourning body, but to illustrate the necessary prerequisites for and consequences of that unity. Augustine brings forth what he calls "a calumny urged by uninstructed pagans, by people who do not know what they are talking about," namely, the claim

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105. It is worth remembering at this point that from the Donatist perspective, it was Augustine's communion who separated from the true church. My statements about the Donatist separation ought to be read as an articulation of Augustine's argument, not my own historical judgment.

106. *en. Ps.* 130.1.

that true holy Christians ought to be able to do miracles, such as raising someone from the dead as Peter did. Using 1 Corinthians 12:17–21 (the different functions of bodily members), Augustine responds, "Peter did it also for me, because I am in the same body in which Peter did it; in that body I am able to do what he from whom I am not divided is able to do."[107] At this point, Augustine introduces Acts 9:4, not to prove simply that Christ is with us on earth, but to prove that every Christian is in the same body as Peter because we are in the body of Christ. Because of this organic unity, any glory or miraculous power that one part exhibits can be predicated of the whole because it is the one body that acts, the one body that is present in heaven and on earth because of its union with Christ.

The rejection of Donatist rigorism lies in the background of this discussion of the church's shared glory. Augustine's image of the body sharing equally in the miraculous deeds of a single member is a photo negative of the rigorist understanding of sinful contamination in the body. The church as the body of Christ is here seen as a mode for communicating grace.[108] This emphasis allows Augustine to deny the spread of individual sin through the body. Moreover, the nature of the body helps cultivate humility because one member need not glory in her own goodness or miracles; rather, the glory of the church lies in its unity as Christ's body. To forgo personal pride and join oneself to the communal body is the beginning of humility, when one learns to look to the wider communion, defined by Christ the head, rather than to one's own interests.

The final place that Acts 9:4 shows up within this series of sermons is the last homily on 1 John. So far, Augustine has used the verse to highlight the continued presence of the risen Christ with his body on earth and the subsequent character of a united and humble church. Now, however, he turns his reading of the verse to its more polemical edge. It is impossible, he urges, to love God and not love the church:

> For if you love the head you also love the members; yet if you do not love the members, neither do you love the head. Do you not fear the

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107. *en. Ps.* 130.6.

108. On this theme, see Robert Dodaro, "The Roles of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Mediation of Virtues," *AugStud* 41, no. 1 (2010): 145–163; G. Remy, "La théologie de la médiation selon saint Augustin. Son actualité," *Revue thomiste* 91, no. 4 (1991): 580–623; Stanislaus J. Grabowski, *The Church: An Introduction to the Theology of St. Augustine* (London: Herder, 1957), 395–420.

voice of the head crying out from heaven on behalf of his members, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" He called the persecutor of his members his own persecutor; he called the lover of his members his own lover.[109]

For Augustine, a refusal to participate in the true unity of the church represents a failure of one's love for God. The Donatists are the obvious target of this condemnation. But more significant is the way in which Augustine comes to this affirmation of the correlative love of Christ and his members. He does so through a reflection on the ultimate divine object of love:

> [Interpreting 1 John 5:2, "In this we know that we love the sons of God, because we love God."] He said "sons of God" who a little earlier was saying "the Son of God" because the sons of God are the body of the only Son of God (*unici Filii Dei*); and with him as the head and us as the members, the Son of God is one (*unus est Filius Dei*). Therefore, one who loves the sons of God, loves the Son of God; and one who loves the Son of God, loves the Father; and it is not possible for someone to love the Father unless one loves the Son; and one who loves the Son also loves the sons of God.[110]

Augustine's argument that the Donatist schism is a failure to love and to embrace the unity of the ecclesial body of Christ is founded upon a pro-Nicene understanding of the mediating work of the Son who leads us to the Father. The structure of the passage itself alludes to the descent and ascent of Christ (though in reverse in this instance). Love of Christ's body leads to love of Christ himself and ultimately to love of the Father. In this use of Acts 9:4, Augustine reveals the purpose of Christ's continued identification with his body on earth: that body is the vehicle that leads to the Father through the Son. This ascent of love is the moral counterpart to the intellectual ascent in the moral epistemology that shapes these sermons. Acts 9:4 demonstrates how the cultivation of love and the reorientation of the mind are part of the same ascent, an ascent that is accomplished in and through the body of Christ.

When Augustine repeats this point near the end of the homily, he offers an interpretive paraphrase of Acts 9:4: "I have ascended into heaven, but

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109. *ep. Io.* 10.3.

110. *ep. Io.* 10.3.

I am still lying on earth. Here I sit at the Father's right hand; there I am still hungry, thirsty, and a traveler." By this identification with the suffering church, Christ intends "that no one would err and, while adoring the head in heaven, trample on the feet on earth."[111] The Donatists are, again, the ones to whom Augustine directs this warning. On one level, Augustine condemns as false piety a worship of Christ that denigrates the earthly body of Christ in the church. On another level, though, Augustine illustrates how the Donatists have condemned themselves. Refusal to participate in the unity of the church is a refusal to ascend with Christ to the Father, to true love and sight of God.

Moreover, there is a parallel to Augustine's faith/sight distinction whereby the flesh of Christ leads to contemplation of his divinity. Love and enjoyment of God, the ultimate goal of the salvific work of Christ's incarnation, are only accomplished through Christ's body, the church. To get to the Father, one must go through the Son. But the Son includes all those joined to his body. Therefore, refusal to be a part of that body is a refusal to journey to the Father. In a sense, the church mediates the mediation of Christ. But this is true only insomuch as the church as the earthly body of Christ is, by Christ's own declaration, a continuation of his incarnation, an organic participant in the single grammatical subject of salvation,[112] that is, the ascending Christ who first descended to us.

Acts 9:4, then, functions in our series of anti-Donatist sermons not only to affirm Christ's continued identity with his earthly body, but to illustrate how participation in that ecclesial unity both requires and cultivates humility and love. The Donatists, in refusing to be united to the body's members, are refusing to be united to Christ himself, who constitutes the *unus* of the body joined to its head. In doing so, the Donatists both exhibit their lack of humility and forsake the means whereby their hearts, along with their minds, might be reformed.

Conclusion

Augustine's theology of the church as the united body of Christ draws upon pro-Nicene prosopological and epistemological principles. Through

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111. *ep. Io.* 10.9.

112. I intentionally mix the "organic" and "grammatical" images here because Augustine, in these sermons at least, explains the former by way of the latter.

his reading of John 3:13, Augustine illustrates how Christians participate in the ascent of Christ to heaven through incorporation into the singular, reflexive grammatical subject of Christ. Moreover, Augustine understands this ascent in and through Christ to be the way in which we are brought to sight of the Father and of Christ in his divinity—indeed, to contemplation of the triune God. Augustine's use of Colossians 3:1–4 along with John 3:13 connects this epistemological concern to the Latin pro-Nicene tradition, particularly Ambrose, and builds upon the material/spiritual distinction that is at the heart of Augustine's moral epistemology. Finally, Acts 9:4, another text read with John 3:13, demonstrates the moral component that is both the prerequisite to and the consequence of participation in the unity of the body of Christ. Thus, the church as the united body of Christ is the locus for the realization of Augustine's moral epistemology and one place where Augustine's trinitarian theology and ecclesiology meet and inform one another.

The moral turn with which I end this chapter is a segue to the next. My primary emphasis for Augustine's image of the church as the body of Christ is epistemological. But, as his use of Acts 9:4 illustrates, the body of Christ also effects the reformation of desire and cultivation of love that accompany and equip our intellectual growth. Augustine most beautifully articulates this in his pithy description of the church as "one Christ loving himself," an image that appears in the final homily on 1 John.[113] Whereas throughout this chapter I have argued for an interpretation of the unity of the body of Christ as the means of our intellectual and moral reformation, this image suggests that love is what establishes that unity in the first place. Such a reading of the "one Christ loving himself" would explain the ambiguity in Augustine's interpretation of Acts 9:4 whereby humility/love is both a prerequisite for and a consequence of incorporation into Christ's body. With this in mind then, in the next chapter I move from the Christological to the pneumatological in order to unpack the way in which the love of the Holy Spirit establishes the unity of the church that is the body of Christ.

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113. *ep. Io.* 10.3.

The Love of the Holy Spirit

Introduction

Love is the most prevalent theme in our sermon series. The singer of the Psalms ascends to the heavenly Jerusalem by his love. The love of God heals our pride through Christ's humility in the opening chapters of John's Gospel. And in the short letter of 1 John, Augustine tells us, "many things are spoken, and almost all are about charity."[1] But this charitable refrain bears a polemical purpose. In his strongest critique of the Donatists, Augustine condemns their separation from the unity of the church as a failure of love.

This anti-Donatist understanding of love and ecclesial unity, I argue, draws upon Augustine's developing theology of the Holy Spirit. Specifically, he connects the eternal identity of the Spirit as the mutual love of Father and Son to the redemptive work of the Spirit in establishing the church's unity through that same love.[2] In light of the epistemological body of

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1. *ep. Io.* prol.

2. The standard twentieth-century assessments of Augustine's pneumatology judge it to be inadequate, underdeveloped, and responsible for the presumed failure of Western pneumatology as a whole. There has recently been much Anglophone interest in rehabilitating Augustine's pneumatology, particularly as it relates to the Latin pro-Nicene tradition. *Augustinian Studies* published a special issue on Augustine and pro-Nicene pneumatology in 39, no. 2 (2008), highlighting the work of Lewis Ayres and Michel Barnes. Most notable in this "Shake and Bake" issue are Ayres, "Innovation and Ressourcement in Pro-Nicene Theology," 187–205; Ayres, "*Spiritus Amborum*: Augustine and Pro-Nicene Pneumatology," 207–221; and Barnes, "Augustine's Last Pneumatology," 223–234. Complementary to this work is Chad Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2012). For a contemporary constructive appropriation of Ayres's and Barnes's work of rehabilitating Augustine on the Spirit, see Travis Ables, *Incarnational Realism: Trinity and Spirit in Augustine and Barth* (London: T & T Clark, 2013). Beyond the Anglophone scholarship, see esp. Basil Studer, "Zur Pneumatologie des Augustinus von Hippo (*De Trinitate* 15,17,27–27,50)," *Augustinianum* 35 (1995): 567–583.

Christ that I explored in the previous chapter, this pneumatological turn fleshes out the full ecclesiological implications by identifying the source of that body's unity.[3] The Spirit gives to the church that which he eternally is, namely, the love that constitutes unity. Moreover, Augustine accomplishes this not by an explicit declaration of the connection between trinitarian and ecclesial unity, but by the way he interprets scripture passages with pro-Nicene polemical precedents for comparing divine and human unity, as well as the work and divinity of the Holy Spirit.

The subtext for Augustine's theology of the Spirit as the love that establishes unity in both the Trinity and the church is the more traditional North African pneumatology that understands possession of the Spirit to be the mark of the one true church.[4] For the Donatists, a communion or individual loses the Spirit as a result of grave sin, such as the alleged Catholic crime of *traditio*.[5] Though this pneumatology has a key baptismal dimension that I will discuss in greater detail in Chapter 4, my argument here demonstrates how Augustine redefines the work of the Spirit in a way that emphasizes unity over purity as evidence of the presence and work of the Spirit within the church.

My argument in this chapter has three major movements. In the first part, I use *en. Ps.* 121.10–13 as a summary text to establish how Augustine understands the work of love in these sermons. The work of love is two-fold. First, love redirects our desire away from this world and toward spiritual things, and ultimately to God. Here love is both the agent of our reorientation and the fruit of that change. Second, love establishes an ordered unity within the created world, especially within the church. The Donatists, by refusing to join the unity of the church, evince a failure of

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3. The pneumatological dimension of Augustine's ecclesiology is an underdeveloped feature of Pasquale Borgomeo's otherwise exhaustive study, *L'Église de ce temps dans la prédication de saint Augustin* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1971), esp. 246–250. For a recent attempt to rectify this lacuna, see Lewis Ayres, "Augustine on the Spirit as the Soul of the Body, or Fragments of a Trinitarian Ecclesiology," *AugStud* 41, no. 1 (2010): 165–182.

4. For the role of the Holy Spirit in North African ecclesiology and baptismal theologies, see Cyprian, *epp.* 69.10.2–11.3, 70.2.3–3.1, 73. See also, from the Council of Carthage 256, *sent. LXXXVII*, 16. In secondary scholarship, see Carlos García MacGaw, *Le Problème du Baptême dans le schisme Donatiste* (Bordeaux: Ausonius Éditions, 2008), 136–138, 151–158, 220–221; J. Patout Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop* (London: Routledge, 2002), 113–114, 125–129, 150, 171–173; Burns, "Christ and the Holy Spirit in Augustine's Theology of Baptism," in *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian*, ed. Joanne McWilliam (Toronto: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1992), 162–163.

5. See Petilian's comments as reproduced by Augustine, *c. litt. Pet.* 2.32.72, 2.36.83, 2.102.231.

this second work of love, which subsequently negates the possibility of the first. Through these two operations of love—the upward ascent of our desire and the copulative force of unity—Augustine will connect the life of the church and the life of the Trinity through the person and work of the Spirit.

I next focus on Latin pro-Nicene exegesis of Acts 4:32a. Augustine inherits a polemical reading of this verse that questions how the unity that obtains among human individuals and that which exists in the Trinity are or are not similar. While maintaining the Ambrosian reading that emphasizes the extent to which divine unity exceeds that of created and material beings, Augustine introduces love as the agent of unity in both the Trinity and the church. This way of reading Acts 4:32a suggests a relationship between the unity of the Trinity and the unity of the church because (1) the two types of unity have been conceptually connected in pro-Nicene polemics, and (2) both types of unity are constituted by love.

Finally, I turn to Augustine's interpretation of Romans 5:5, which, like Acts 4:32a, has a relevant pro-Nicene interpretive legacy. Building upon Ambrose's use of the verse to articulate the full divinity of the Spirit through the principle of common operations, Augustine uses Romans 5:5 to argue for both the Spirit's eternal identity as the mutual love of Father and Son, as well as the Spirit's redemptive work as the uniting agent of love in the church. If Augustine's reading of Acts 4:32a suggests a relationship between the unity of the Trinity and the unity of the church, then his use of Romans 5:5 solidifies that connection by identifying the Spirit as that love which brings about in the life of the church what he eternally is in the perfect union of the Trinity.[6]

Prolegomena on Love

Augustine ends his exposition of Psalm 121, the fourth sermon in our series, with an extended reflection on the nature of love and its role in our

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6. For a recent, constructive engagement with the role of the Spirit as love in Augustine's trinitarian thought, see Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay on the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 288–295. Though she is not concerned with ecclesiology, Coakley's reading of the relationship between the necessary ordering of the sexes in Augustine's anthropology and his understanding of unity in the godhead may also help elucidate the larger significance of Augustine's insistence on unity and order in the church.

ascent to the heavenly Jerusalem.[7] Though much has been written on the role of love in the tractates on 1 John,[8] which lie at the end of our series, this earlier sermon sets the terms for much of the discussion that follows in the next few months of preaching. Moreover, by focusing on the ascent to the heavenly Jerusalem, this passage connects directly with Augustine's moral epistemology of the church, which I examined in Chapter 1. Having established there the way in which the earthly church participates in and orients its thought and desire toward that eternal Jerusalem, here I focus on how love effects that participation of the earthly church in the heavenly one.

Augustine reads Psalm 121:6, "Ask what makes for the peace of Jerusalem," as pointing toward love. He identifies love as both the peace of Jerusalem and that which leads to that peace. The operation of love establishes peace by fulfilling the law: "Love is a powerful thing. Do you wish to see how strong love is? If someone, through some necessity, is unable to fulfill God's commandment, let that person love the one who does fulfill the commandment, and through that other person he, too, will have fulfilled God's commandment."[9] To support this, Augustine cites 1 Corinthians 13:3. Whereas Paul argues that works without love are without profit, Augustine inverts the argument to claim that love suffices when a physical act is impossible. By this interiorization of the law, Augustine

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7. For more on the significance of this sermon, see my discussion of it in Chapter 1, pp. 36–40, 48–49, and Chapter 2, p. 89.

8. See, *inter multa alia*, Dany Dideberg, "Le mystère trinitaire et le commentaire Augustinien de la première épître de saint Jean," in *La christologie et la Trinité chez les Pères*, ed. Marie-Anne Vannier (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2013), 364–371; Roland Teske, "Augustine's Inversion of 1 John 4:8," *AugStud* 39, no. 1 (2008): 49–60; John Hoskins, "Augustine on Love and Church Unity in 1 John," *SP* 43 (2006): 125–129; Lewis Ayres, "Augustine, Christology, and God as Love: An Introduction to the Homilies on 1 John," in *Nothing Greater, Nothing Better: Theological Essays on the Love of God*, ed. Kevin Vanhoozer (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 76–93; Margaret Miles, "Love's Body, Intentions, and Effects: Augustine's 'Homilies on the Epistle of First John,'" *Sewanee Theological Review* 41 (1997): 19–33; Tarcisius van Bavel, "The Double Face of Love in Augustine," *AugStud* 17 (1986): 169–181; Dany Dideberg, *Saint Augustin et la première épître de saint Jean. Une théologie de l'agapè* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1975); J. Gallay, "La Conscience de la Charité Fraternelle d'après les *Tractatus in Primam Joannis* de saint Augustin," *Revue d'Études Augustiniennes* 1 (1955): 1–20.

9. *en. Ps.* 121.10. In this chapter, as throughout the book, I translate *dilectio* as "love" and *caritas* as "charity," simply to clarify which Latin word is being used. Conceptually there is no real distinction between the terms in these sermons. As Augustine himself says elsewhere, *quid est caritas? dilectio* (*disc. Chr.* 5; *s.* 53.11). See Teske, "Augustine's Inversion," 52; Dany Dideberg, "Esprit Saint et charité," *Nouvelle Revue Theologique* 2 (1975): 99.

makes sin a question not so much of external acts as of the inner disposi-
tion of the heart, an often inscrutable dimension.

This is a common anti-Donatist argument about the interiority of sin
and the powerful efficacy of love.[10] In the midst of the Psalms of Ascent,
though, Augustine expands upon the wider soteriological significance of
love. This love is the vehicle for our ascent: "We travel not by feet but by
affections. See if you are so traveling. Each and every one of you must
ask himself how he is disposed to the holy poor person, toward the needy
brother, and toward the needy beggar."[11] This is the ascent of love that
characterizes Augustine's moral epistemology in these sermons: the soul
is moved by its love,[12] and the ultimate goal of such movement is the heav-
enly Jerusalem.

Having praised love, Augustine next clarifies what such love entails. It
involves a turning away from love of the world and toward love of the true
good, of heavenly things, and of God. The psalmist tells us that "there are
abundant riches for those who love [Jerusalem]." Augustine explicates this
text to highlight the distinction between heavenly and earthly riches:

> There are great riches for those who love her [Jerusalem]. These
> riches come from poverty: here the lovers of Jerusalem are impov-
> erished, there they are rich; here they are infirm, there they are
> strong; here they are destitute, there they are wealthy. How are they
> made wealthy? Here they gave away what they had received from
> God for a time, and there they receive what God awards them for
> eternity. Here, my brothers, even the wealthy are poor. It is good for

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10. See *bapt.* 5.21.29. Patout Burns, "Appropriating Augustine Appropriating Cyprian,"
AugStud 36, no. 1 (2005), 113–130, argues that this aspect of Augustine's anti-Donatist theol-
ogy is an appropriation of Cyprian (*unit. eccl.* 11–14), whose legacy serves as the battleground
for North African ecclesiological debate. This chapter adds to Burns's analysis a look at
how Augustine's reading of Cyprian is shaped by his pro-Nicene culture. As Burns notes,
"[Augustine] identified the power to forgive sins with the love of God which is spread into
the hearts of the faithful, linking it to the presence of the Holy Spirit which inspires and
produces that union of love which is the visible communion of the church" (127). The way
that Augustine makes that connection between God's love, the Spirit, and the communion
of the church is dependent on the pro-Nicene dynamics I illustrate in this chapter. See also,
Burns, "Christ and the Holy Spirit," 161–170.

11. *en. Ps.* 121.11.

12. "All love either descends or ascends, for by good desire we are raised to God, but by bad
desire we are plummeted into the depths" (*en. Ps.* 122.1). This passage leads into the sum-
mary statement of unity in the *totus Christus* that I investigated in the previous chapter.

a wealthy man to know that he is poor. For if he considers himself to be full, he is swollen [with pride], not fulfilled. Let him recognize that he is empty so that he might be able to be filled. What does he have? Gold. What does he not yet have? Eternal life.[13]

This represents the ascent of love that accompanies—and is identical with—the epistemological ascent I described in the previous chapter. There is a distinction between the love of this world and the love of the heavenly Jerusalem. The improper love of this world is parallel to an "earthly" knowledge that cannot yet contemplate heavenly things. Just as the reformation of our knowledge is a function of our ascent to sight of God, so the reformation of our love in this world is the vehicle whereby we will ascend to the true good, the peace of God, the proper object of our love.

Augustine elaborates on the operation of this love by clarifying that love itself brings about this reformation in our affections. When the psalmist prays, "May peace reign in your strength," Augustine joins this plea to Song of Songs 8:6—"Love is as strong as death"—to identify mighty love as the strength in which the peace of Jerusalem reigns. To demonstrate what he means by the strength of love, Augustine explains, "Charity itself slays what we were so that we may become what we were not. . . . If it is strong, it has great power and force; it is power itself."[14] Love itself brings about this change in us so that we might love properly. Love is both the agent of our reorientation and the fruit of it.

This operation of love is not simply an internal matter of the human soul and its ascent to God. To illustrate further the power of love, Augustine connects it to the proper ordering of the created world: "Through love the weak are ruled by the strong, earth by heaven, the nations by the thrones; therefore the Psalm prays, 'May peace reign in your strength,' may peace reign in your love."[15] Here Augustine evinces the wider scope of his theology of love: love establishes or maintains order in the world, whether it be the proper relationship between soul and body or the proper administration of civil government.

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13. *en. Ps.* 121.11.

14. *en. Ps.* 121.12.

15. *en. Ps.* 121.12.

This ordering operation of love both in our hearts and in creation is oriented toward God as the ultimate object of our desire.[16] Contemplating the psalmist's discussion of the city's "abundance," Augustine explains, "the fullness of delights and the surfeit of riches is God himself, who is *Idipsum*, in whom the city [the heavenly Jerusalem] participates. This will be our abundance. But how does this happen? Through charity, that is, through strength."[17] The love that reforms our desire is directed ultimately to the only thing that can satisfy it, the one who is *Idipsum*. Moreover, in this passage Augustine clarifies that the journey of the soul of Christians to the heavenly Jerusalem is a progression toward sharing in God's own peace. The very love that causes us to desire God in the first place effects our participation in God's peace.

The ordering work of love in the world, such as in the peaceful social and political relationships described previously, is itself part of that work whereby our souls return to God through love. Augustine can therefore move smoothly from expounding the role of love in establishing the peace of the eternal city to condemning the Donatists for refusing to participate in the peace of the church:

> Here the psalmist speaks in the same way he did about charity: "For the sake of my brothers and relatives, I spoke of your peace." O Jerusalem, city who participates in *Idipsum*, in this life and on this earth I am a pauper, a pilgrim, and one who moans, who does not yet enjoy your peace. Still, I proclaim your peace, but not on my own account, as do the heretics who, seeking their own glory, say, "Peace be with you" yet do not have the peace they proclaim to the peoples. For if they had peace they would not tear apart unity.[18]

The sojourning church, though it does not yet fully participate in the peace of Jerusalem, a peace grounded in God's own eternal Being, is still defined by its relationship to the love of that peaceful city. The Donatists, the "heretics" who "tear apart unity," proclaim a false peace. Augustine has so connected peace to the unifying and ordering function of love, that an

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16. See *b. vita.* 4.35; *mor.* 1.13.23–1.16.29; *ep.* 11; *vera rel.* 39.72–41.78, 55.113. See also Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology*, 25–26, 106–113, 134–150, 177–197.

17. *en. Ps.* 121.12.

18. *en. Ps.* 121.13.

unwillingness to participate in the life of the earthly (Catholic) church is evidence that the love by which one comes to share in God's peace is not present in the heart of a schismatic.

Thus for Augustine, Donatism is, above all, a failure to love. This love is not merely an earthly affection; rather, it is that motion of desire that unites the soul to God. Moreover, the individual does not ascend to such divine union in isolation but through the fellowship of the earthly church. By moving from the love of the heavenly Jerusalem to the love that unites the earthly church, Augustine highlights the intimate relationship between the two. We journey to the former through the latter—much as we journey to the divinity of Christ through his body.

Love as the Source of Unity

To uncover the source of this image of love, I turn now to one of Augustine's favorite verses for praising ecclesial unity. Acts 4:32a—"Now the whole group of those who believed was of one heart and one soul"—has long been recognized as a key text for Augustine's theology, particularly his monastic thought.[19] But little attention has been given to the Latin pro-Nicene context for Augustine's use of this text.[20] By attending to the pro-Nicene use of the verse in Hilary and Ambrose, I will show that Augustine inherits a polemical concern for how the unity of humans is or is not similar to the unity of the

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19. See esp. Kazuhiko Demura, "*Anima una et cor unum*: St. Augustine's Congregations and His Monastic life," *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church* 4 (2006): 257–266; Luc Verheijen, *Saint Augustine's Monasticism in the Light of Acts 4.32–35* (Villanova, PA: Villanova University Press, 1979); Charles Brockwell, "Augustine's Ideal of Monastic Community: A Paradigm for His Doctrine of the Church," *AugStud* 8 (1977): 91–109.

20. There are three notable exceptions. Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 256–258, offers a brief analysis of Augustine's anti-Homoian use of the text. Though Ayres is mainly interested in the "mature" reading in texts after 420, he notes that the idea of "the Spirit as active lover and agent of unity within the Godhead. . . lie[s] just beneath the surface of texts from a decade earlier" (257). One such text is *Io. ev. tr.* 14, which I discuss below in greater detail. Ayres does not discuss the relationship between divine and human unity that is the focus of my analysis here. John Paul Hoskins, "Acts 4:32 in Augustine's Ecclesiology," *SP* 49 (2010): 73–77, hints at many of the connections I will make, even noting that "the unity of the Church is intimately and analogically connected with the unity of the Trinity" (73). But the brevity of Hoskins's article precludes any deeper analysis of this relationship, and he has nothing to say about possible pro-Nicene sources. More substantial is Marie-François Berrouard, "La première communauté de Jérusalem comme image de l'unité de la Trinité: une des exégèses augustiniennes d'*Act* 4,32a," in *Homo Spiritalis: Festgabe für Luc Verheijen OSA zu seinem 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Cornelius Mayer (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1987), 207–224. Even here, though, Berrouard only mentions Hilary and Ambrose *en passant* (208). Berrouard does

Trinity. In his appropriation of this tradition, Augustine emphasizes (1) that the issue of human unity is a primarily ecclesiological matter, and (2) that love is the agent of unity for both the Trinity and the church. In this way, though he maintains that the unity of the Trinity transcends any form of created unity, Augustine's reading of Acts 4:32a suggests a parallel between the ecclesial and trinitarian unities through the common work of love. I turn first to the Latin pro-Nicene tradition that first establishes this connection in its reading of Acts 4:32a.

Latin Pro-Nicene Readings of Acts 4:32a

Acts 4:32a has no significant tradition of interpretation in extant North African texts prior to Augustine.[21] It seems likely, then, that Augustine is the first to introduce it into the ecclesiological disputes with the Donatists. In doing so, he looks to the Latin pro-Nicene tradition for the significance of the passage. A look at this tradition reveals the polemical context that shapes exegesis of the verse. The dispute regards whether or not the unity of the earliest Christians is comparable to the unity of the triune persons. What arises from this debate is a pro-Nicene interpretation that embraces the juxtaposition of ecclesial unity with trinitarian unity while maintaining that the latter ultimately transcends the former.

Two texts are important precedents for Augustine's use of Acts 4:32a in this sermon series. The first is Hilary's *trin.* 8.5–8. Here, Hilary defends the essential unity of Father and Son as one God against "heretics" who read John 10:30 ("I and the Father are one") as signifying "an agreement of unanimity, so that there might be in them a unity of will not of nature, that is, that they might be one not through that by which they are, but through that which they will."[22] These opponents bring forth Acts 4:32a in order to prove

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emphasize that Augustine is not "psychologizing" the Trinity in his connection between divine and human unity; rather, he is making sense of a mystery of the faith by way of the common experience of Christian community (223). I agree with Berrouard's analysis, but I believe we get a better sense of what Augustine is doing if we tie his reading more closely to the Latin pro-Nicene precedents. Moreover, Berrouard does not effectively explain the way in which the Holy Spirit as divine love effects a unity among Christians that is not only parallel to but a participation in the unity of the Trinity. This is what I will show by following my analysis of Acts 4:32 with a look at Rom 5:5 in these sermons.

21. Acts 4:32a does appear several times in Cyprian, but only as part of a catena of texts extolling unity. There is no extended analysis. See, *unit. eccl.* 25; *eleem.* 25; *ep.* 7.3.

22. Hilary, *trin.* 8.5.

"that there might be a unity of diverse hearts in one heart and soul through an agreement of will."[23] This connection between John 10:30 and Acts 4:32a can be traced back to Origen. In *c. Cels.* 8.12, Origen uses the unity of hearts and souls in Acts as a balance to the unity of Father and Son in John 10:30, thus undercutting any who would "deny that Father and Son are two ὑποστάσεις."[24] The logic here is that just as the unity of humans in one heart and mind does not negate the distinction that remains between human individuals, so the unity of Father and Son does not destroy their individual identities. Though Origen does not define this as a "moral" as opposed to "natural" unity, Hilary's opponents seem to build upon this way of reading John 10:30 and Acts 4:32a together.

Hilary's reinterpretation of the verse comes by way of Ephesians 4:4–5:

> For as to those whose soul and heart were one, I ask whether they were one through faith in God? Certainly it was through faith. For through this the soul and heart of all were one. Again I ask, whether there is one faith or some other faith? Certainly there is one, and according to the authority of the Apostle himself, who proclaims there to be one faith just as there is one Lord, and one baptism, and one hope, and one God (Eph 4:4–5). If therefore it is through faith, that is, through the nature of one faith, that all were one, how do you not understand a natural unity in those who through the nature of one faith are one? For all were reborn to innocence, to immortality, to the knowledge of God, to the faith of hope. . . . If these things are one by agreement rather than by nature, ascribe a unity of will to those also who have been born again into them. If, however, they have been regenerated into the nature of one life and eternity, by which their soul and heart are one, the unity of agreement is not enough for those who are one by regeneration into the same nature.[25]

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23. Hilary, *trin.* 8.5.

24. For the legacy of Origen in fourth-century disputes, see Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 20–30; and R. P. C Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318–381* (London: T & T Clark, 1988), 61–70.

25. Hilary, *trin.* 8.7. Ayres claims that Ambrose "is the only Latin pro-Nicene to use Acts 4:32 as an analogy for the Trinity" (*Augustine and the Trinity*, 257). I think this passage from Hilary ought to be added to Ambrose's *fid.* 1.2 (discussed below) since it demonstrates the larger tradition of interpretation and contestation of the proper way of reading Acts 4:32 along with John 10:30.

Hilary, following the precedent of Origen and of Hilary's own opponents, accepts that John 10:30 and Acts 4:32 ought to be read together. Yet he claims that the unity of Christians in one heart and one soul is in fact a natural unity because it derives from the one common humanity in which Christians participate through regeneration. A common "faith," then, is not simply a matter of shared belief or agreement; rather, it indicates a "natural unity" because it comes from the new life, the new humanity, into which Christians are incorporated. Hilary will go on to highlight the Christological nature of that unity through a reading of Galatians 3:27–28. The unity of Christians is natural because "they are one in that they have put on one Christ through the nature of one baptism."[26]

Following Hilary's pro-Nicene appropriation of this connection between John 10:30 and Acts 4:32a, Ambrose also reads Acts 4:32a as evidence for the unity of divine persons. In his opening remarks to the emperor Gratian in *On the Christian Faith* (*fid.*), Ambrose offers a defense of the Son's divinity based on the common divine will and operations: "For whatsoever the Father does, the Son also does similarly."[27] The Son's divinity is proven by the unity of divinity and divine actions.[28] The capstone of this argument is Acts 4:32a, read along with 1 Corinthians 6:17 and Genesis 2:24/Matthew 19:5:

> And indeed, if for all those who believed, as it is written, "there was one soul and one heart"; if everyone that adheres to the Lord is one spirit (1 Cor 6:17), as the Apostle said; if a man and his wife are one in flesh (Gen 2:24/Matt 19:5); if all we humans, so much as pertains to nature, are of one substance; if this is what the Scripture says of humans—of whom there can be no comparison to the divine persons—that the many are one, how much more (*quanto magis*) are the Father and the Son one in divinity, where there is no difference either of substance or of will![29]

Whereas Hilary had to reclaim Acts 4:32a from the "Arians," Ambrose is now able to assume Acts 4:32a as a pro-Nicene text. Ambrose is a little

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26. Hilary, *trin*. 8.8. The reconstitution of human nature in Christ is a central theme in Hilary. See Ellen Scully, "The Assumption of All Humanity in Saint Hilary of Poitiers' *Tractatus super Psalmos*" (PhD diss., Marquette University, 2011).

27. Ambrose, *fid*. 1.2.13.

28. For the relationship between nature and power, see Chapter 4, esp. pp. 160–169.

29. Ambrose, *fid*. 1.2.18.

more nuanced than Hilary, though. Hilary explicitly identifies the unity of heart and soul as signifying the natural unity of those regenerated in Christ. Ambrose assumes a common nature for all humanity—redeemed or not—but keeps more of a distance between the divine and the human forms of unity. He uses a *quanto magis* argument that assumes that the unity—both moral and natural—of humans obtains to a lesser degree than that of the divine persons.

Ambrose's argument of common operations, then, can be seen as a development of Hilary's use of Acts 4:32a to show the way in which a common will is, in some cases, indicative of a common nature. But Ambrose's insistence that there is a distinction between both natural and moral unity in human persons and divine persons is more sensitive to the argument that could be made—much as Hilary's opponents did based on Acts 4:32a—that the unity of divine persons is *just like* the unity of humans.

Augustine's Pro-Nicene Reading of Acts 4:32a beyond Our Sermon Series

These pre-Augustinian Latin pro-Nicene uses connect Acts 4:32a to questions of the unity of Father and Son and the way in which human unity is or is not equivalent to that same unity.[30] A look at Augustine's use of the verse in his "anti-Arian" works shows that he knows this tradition of exegesis and adapts it by adding love as the constitutive agent of unity.

For instance, Augustine writes *ep.* 238 to the "Arian" Pascentius between 404 and 411, around the time of our sermon series.[31] In this letter Augustine, defending the consubstantiality of Father, Son, and Spirit, makes use of the same constellation of texts that Ambrose uses. To explain John 10:30, he turns first to 1 Corinthians 6:16–17:

> For if it is said of the flesh of diverse sexes, "He who adheres to a prostitute is one body," and of the human spirit, which is not the Lord, it is written, "He who adheres to the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor 6:16–17), then how much more (*quanto magis*) are God the Father in

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30. Verheijen argues that Augustine owes his understanding of "the collective sense" of Acts 4:32a to Paulinus of Nola, as evidenced by *ep.* 30.3 (*Saint Augustine's Monasticism*, 10). It seems dubious to attribute this reading completely to Paulinus, though, given the pro-Nicene use in Hilary and Ambrose. Perhaps Paulinus helps Augustine appreciate the implications of the ecclesial side of the church/Trinity unity parallel.

31. For the dating, see Johannes Divjak, "Epistulae," in *Aug-Lex*, esp. 1002.

the Son and God the Son in the Father and the Spirit of the Father
and of the Son one God, where there is no diversity of nature, since
it is said of diverse things that join with each other that they are
either one spirit or one body?[32]

Here Augustine makes the same *quanto magis* move with 1 Corinthians
6:17 that Ambrose does in *fid.* 1.2.18. There are two significant changes,
though. First, instead of using the "one flesh" of Genesis 2:24/Matthew
19:5, Augustine expands the 1 Corinthians passage itself to include 6:16
on the union of a man and a prostitute. In this way Augustine follows
Paul's own gloss of Genesis 2:24, adding that verse to the constellation of
texts by implication. This further demonstrates the influence of Ambrose
upon this passage. Second, Augustine includes the Spirit in these pas-
sages, even though the initial text of John 10:30 only discusses the unity of
Father and Son. This signals Augustine's typical way of emphasizing the
Spirit as the Spirit of both Father and Son, and in doing so anticipates the
way in which the Spirit connects the unity of the Trinity to the unity of the
church, a theme I will unpack when I come to Romans 5:5.

Continuing this same line of argumentation, Augustine soon comes
to Acts 4:32a:

One faith and one hope and one love caused the many saints, who
were called to be coheirs with Christ in the adoption of sons, to have
one soul and one heart unto God. And this especially compels us
to understand the one and the same nature of deity (if it can be so
called) of Father and Son, so that Father and Son, who are one and are
inseparably one and are eternally one, are not two gods but one God.
For those men were one through the fellowship and communion
of the one and the same nature whereby they were all men, even if
sometimes they were not one on account of the diversity of their wills
and sentiments and the difference of their opinions and customs.
Nevertheless, they will be fully and perfectly one when they will have
come to the end "that God may be all in all" (1 Cor 15:28). Yet God the
Father and his Son, his Word, God with God, are always and ineffably
one, and hence even more so are they not two gods but one God.[33]

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32. *ep.* 238.2.11.

33. *ep.* 238.2.13.

In his emphasis on the "communion of one and the same nature whereby they were all men," Augustine echoes Ambrose's emphasis that humans are "one substance" because of a common nature. Moreover, the *quanto magis* argument lies at the forefront of Augustine's use of this passage as he highlights the distinction between human and divine natures, much as Ambrose did.

There are, however, three differences worth noting between Augustine's use of Acts 4:32a and Ambrose's. First, Augustine, as is his wont, glosses Acts 4:32a with the phrase *in deum* to describe the unity of the apostolic community. This signifies the way in which Augustine understands the unity of Christians to transcend or at least intensify the natural unity of human beings.[34] Second, this orientation of the unity toward God fore-shadows what Augustine does with 1 Corinthians 15:28. Though he adopts Ambrose's *quanto magis* distinction between the unity of humanity and the unity of the divine persons, Augustine adds a soteriological disclaimer to the distinction: the unity of humanity will be "perfectly one" only when humanity is united with God in the eschaton. This is the theological sig-nificance of Augustine's *in deum* addition to Acts 4:32a. The unity of the church is oriented toward and a precursor to that ultimate eschatological unity in which God will be "all in all." Third, Augustine emphasizes that it is "one faith, one hope, and one charity" that establishes the unity of heart and soul. It is possible that this is a reflection of Hilary's use of Ephesians 4:5 to describe the "one faith" as that which establishes a natural unity of Christians in Christ. Augustine seems to have replaced Ephesians 4:5 with 1 Corinthians 13:13 within the same logic that Hilary uses at *trin.* 8.7.

In addition to this letter against Pascentius, Augustine uses Acts 4:32a in another anti-Homoian context two decades later in his debate with and response to Maximinus. In the debate itself, Augustine cites Acts 4:32a, as previously, to demonstrate by a *quanto magis* argument the way in which the divine persons are essentially and simply one:

> For the souls of many humans were made one soul by the recep-tion of the Holy Spirit and in a way welded together by the fire of charity, according to what the apostle says, "They had one soul and heart." The charity of the Holy Spirit made so many hearts,

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34. For commentary on the significance of *in deum*, see Verheijen, *Saint Augustine's Monasticism*, 15–16.

so many thousands of hearts, one heart. The Holy Spirit called so many thousands of souls "one soul" because that same Holy Spirit made them one soul. How much more (*quanto magis*) do we call the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit one God who always and inseparably cling to one another with ineffable charity?[35]

The difference between this passage and that from *ep.* 238 is the emphasis on "the charity of the Holy Spirit" as the agent of unity among Christians. Moreover, Augustine suggests a parallel between that charity of the Holy Spirit and the "ineffable charity" of the divine persons. Our sermon series, coming between the correspondence with Pascentius and the debate with Maximinus, demonstrates Augustine's developing theology of the uniting force of love in the church in his interpretation of Acts 4:32a. When I come to his use of Romans 5:5 later in this chapter, I will show how his reading of that verse in these sermons connects the Holy Spirit to that work of love, both in our hearts and in the eternal unity of the Trinity.

First, though, I turn now to two sermons from our series that make use of Acts 4:32a. The first is primarily trinitarian and demonstrates a clear dependence on Ambrose. The second is explicitly anti-Donatist and demonstrates the connection between Augustine's pro-Nicene use of the text and his application of it to the life of the church against the Donatists. In both discussions, love establishes the unity of persons, both divine and human.

In Ioannis evangelium tractatus 14.9: The Unity of the Trinity as the Summit of Charity

Augustine's fourteenth homily on John, preached in late May or early June of 407, is one of the last in our series.[36] It contains no explicit references to the Donatists. Instead, it is a meditation on the trinitarian implications of the final verses of John 3. I turn to it first, though, because Augustine here cites Acts 4:32a in a manner undoubtedly indebted to Ambrose (if not Hilary). Moreover, it reveals the distinctive emphasis on love that

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35. *conl. Max.* 12. See also, *c. Max.* 2.20.1, 2.22.3.

36. *Io. ev. tr.* 14, along with 15 and 16, is one of the more disputed texts regarding dating. Though it is likely part of this same series, even A.-M. La Bonnardière concedes that it may have been preached in the following year. See La Bonnardière, *Recherches de Chronologie Augustinienne* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1965), 56–62.

Augustine brings to his appropriation of this tradition of interpretation. While in this passage Augustine focuses on the trinitarian implications of Acts 4:32a, in the next passage that I examine he will move to the ecclesiological significance.

When in the course of *Io. ev. tr.* 14 Augustine comes to John 3:34—"The one whom God has sent speaks the words of God"—he offers a pro-Nicene reading which affirms that God sends God.[37] Such sending ought not lead one to think that there are more than one God, though; "for so great is the charity of the Holy Spirit, so great the peace of unity, that when one asks about each, your answer is 'God'; when one asks about the Trinity, your answer is 'God.'"[38] The unity of the Father and Son is founded upon the "charity of the Holy Spirit," which unites the two persons in the peace of a single, simple divinity. To defend this claim about the unifying operation of the Spirit within the Trinity, Augustine appeals to the evidence of the earliest community of Christians in Jerusalem:

> And what does scripture say about that congregation of saints? "They had one soul and one heart in the Lord." If charity made one soul out of so many souls, and made one heart out of so many hearts, how much charity must there be between the Father and Son? Certainly it must be greater than among those humans who have one heart. If, therefore, on account of charity many brothers have one heart, and on account of charity many brothers have one soul, will you say that God the Father and God the Son are two? It they are two gods, then the summit of charity is not there. For if charity is so great that it makes your soul and your friend's soul into one soul here, how could Father and Son not be one God there? … Many souls are many humans and, if they love one another, there is one soul; but, among humans, they can still also be called many souls, because there is not the same degree of joining as there is in God. There however, though it is right for you to say "one God," it is not right to say "two gods," or "three." Let this commend to you how great the supereminence and the perfection of charity are, such that there can be nothing greater.[39]

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37. For prior pro-Nicene arguments of sending, see Ambrose, *spir.* 3.1.7–8.

38. *Io. ev. tr.* 14.9.

39. *Io. ev. tr.* 14.9.

Augustine's use of Acts 4:32a here closely parallels that of Ambrose in *fid.* 1.2.18.[40] Augustine deploys a *quanto magis* argument, built upon the way in which humans are united to one another through love. He then argues that divine unity surpasses such human unity for two reasons. The first and most explicit reason is the distinction between created and divine existence. Created persons existing in bodies cannot, at least in this life, ever really cease being distinct. But uncreated divinity is not subject to such limitations. Ambrose makes a similar point in his argument for distinguishing between human and divine forms of unity.

Second, Augustine bases this *quanto magis* on his understanding of God as "the summit of charity." This develops Augustine's particular way of adapting Ambrose's argument. Unlike Ambrose's use of Acts 4:32a, Augustine specifically identifies charity as the agent of this unity. If God is the "summit of charity"—an allusion perhaps to 1 John 4:8,16—then God ought to evince the proper work of charity to a supreme degree. Augustine can thus build upon Ambrose's reading of Acts 4:32a as pointing to the unity of Father and Son by connecting the two forms of unity through the copulative force of charity.

Therefore, at the time of these sermons, Augustine knows the Latin pro-Nicene use of Acts 4:32a, at least the Ambrosian version. In addition, he deploys it with a particular emphasis on love as that which constitutes the unity of divine persons. I turn now to an ecclesiological use of Acts 4:32a in a sermon preached less than two months earlier. Here Augustine reveals the anti-Donatist implications of his reading of Acts 4:32a.

Enarrationes in Psalmos 132: Monastic Unity and the Oil of Charity

Augustine's exposition of Psalm 132 represents an explicitly ecclesiological and anti-Donatist use of Acts 4:32a that also draws upon the pro-Nicene readings of Hilary and Ambrose. Moreover, as with his trinitarian reading of the verse, Augustine identifies love as the primary agent of unity within the church. The Donatists' failure to participate in that unity is a failure of love—a love that Augustine identifies as the gift of the Holy Spirit that Christ gives to his body, the church. Thus, *en. Ps.* 132, when read alongside

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40. The fact that both Ambrose and Augustine use 1 Cor 6:17 along with Acts 4:32a, though I have not quoted that part of Augustine's passage here, further emphasizes Augustine's debt.

Io. ev. tr. 14.9, illustrates the parallel that Augustine draws between trinitarian and ecclesial unity through his appropriation of the Latin pro-Nicene reading of Acts 4:32a.

In this long sermon, Augustine makes several moves worth unpacking. The first move focuses on the initial verse of Psalm 132: "See how good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity." Augustine remarks that the sound of the verse "is as sweet as charity itself, the sweet charity that makes brothers dwell together in unity."[41] His initial concern, however, is to discern whether Psalm 132:1 refers to all Christians or only to those elite few who take a vow.[42] Monastic communities, he argues, arise from love of unity, but such unity was first instanced following Pentecost, as described in Acts 4:32a.

> The first ones who lived together in unity were those who sold all that they had and placed the proceeds of their possessions at the feet of the apostles. ... What is meant by "in unity (*in unum*)"? It says, "They had but one mind and one heart unto God" (Acts 4:32a). Therefore these were the first to hear, "See how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to live together in unity." They were the first to hear but not the only ones. For this love and unity of brothers came not only as far as them. For this joy of love came to their descendants as well, along with the vows made to God.[43]

Augustine thus ties the monastic life of the fifth century to the almost mythic unity of the first Christians in Acts. The vows of such a community center not so much on poverty or chastity as on "love and the unity of brothers." In this way, Augustine understands monastic communities to manifest the purest form of ecclesial communion that is idealized in the apostolic community but not necessarily realized in the entire earthly church. With this first move, Augustine establishes the unity of monastic communities as a perfected version of the unity to which the whole church is moved by the work of love.

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41. *en. Ps.* 132.1.

42. For the relationship between monastic unity and ecclesial unity, see Demura, "*Anima una*," 264–265. Demura argues, rightly I believe, that Augustine's concern about monastic communities in *en. Ps.* 132 is illustrative of the wider ecclesial unity that is opposed to the Donatists. Similarly, Brockwell, "Augustine's Ideal," 95.

43. *en. Ps.* 132.2.

In the second move I wish to highlight, Augustine returns to Acts 4:32a to attack the Donatists for forsaking the unity of love that monastic communities exhibit as an inspiration to the entire church. This move focuses on a dispute over names, particularly the name "monk" (*monachos*), which the Catholics use for those living the monastic life, and the names "circumcellion" and *agonistici*, which the Catholics and Donatists use, respectively, to describe the brigand bands often associated with the Donatists. Earlier in the sermon, Augustine offers a derogatory derivation of the title "circumcellion,"[44] and he then tackles the preferred name, *agonistici*. Augustine affirms that they are right to say that *agonistici* derives from ἀγων in 2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought a good fight."[45] But, he cautions, they ought to be sure they fight for Christ and not against him.

This brings Augustine to a defense of the term "monk." Presenting a rhetorical interlocutor who claims that the term has no scriptural warrant, Augustine points to the unity that Psalm 132:1 praises:

> Μόνος means "one (*unus*)," but not any kind of "one." For there is one in a crowd, but that is one with many. He can be called "one" but not μόνος, that is, *solus*; for μόνος means one alone (*unus solus*). Therefore those who so live in unity as to be made one person (*unum hominem*), so that for them it is true, as it is written, "one soul and one heart"—many bodies but not many souls; many bodies but not many hearts—, rightly are they called μόνος, that is, one alone. . . . Of course those who have cut themselves off from unity insult the name of unity. Of course the name "monk" displeases those who do not wish to live in unity with their brothers but instead, following Donatus, abandon Christ.[46]

It is not enough for Augustine to say that Catholic monks strive for unity; he uses the "one soul and one heart" of Acts 4:32a to illustrate a type of unity that transcends the distinction of discrete bodies, even of discrete persons. In the reference to *unum hominem*, one can see the *unus homo* of the *Christus totus* that I explored in the previous chapter. Here Augustine offers a more substantive account of what establishes that unity, beyond

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44. *en. Ps.* 132.3.

45. *en. Ps.* 132.6.

46. *en. Ps.* 132.6.

(or rather, in addition to) Christ's own person. The unity of heart and soul, defined earlier as an operation of love, unites disparate persons into "one alone." Augustine here echoes Hilary's affirmation that the unity of heart and mind is a natural union because of the new humanity of Christ into which the faithful are incorporated.[47]

In the third move of *en. Ps.* 132 that I wish to highlight, Augustine proffers an extended interpretation of the oil that descends from Aaron's hair to his beard and to his tunic (Ps 132:2). With this move, Augustine connects the ecclesial unity of Acts 4:32a, established by love, to the unity of the church as the body of Christ. In doing so, he reveals the divine source of the love that effects the unity of the church, suggesting a connection between the trinitarian and ecclesiological readings of Acts 4:32a through the eternal identity and redemptive work of the Holy Spirit.

Augustine interprets Aaron as symbolic of the *Christus totus*, whose head is the exalted Christ and whose tunic is the body, the church, and whose beard is the first apostles. But the oil is the Holy Spirit that proceeds from Christ to the apostles and then to the rest of the church.[48] The paramount illustration of this oil of the Holy Spirit is the martyr Stephen, who is emblematic of all the martyred saints. Even though martyrs like Stephen seem to have been conquered by violence, "because charity was not conquered, oil descended onto the beard."[49] Stephen's emulation of Christ in his prayer for the forgiveness of his persecutors demonstrates his anointing in the oil of the Spirit.

Thus, the unity of the church as the body of Christ with Christ the head allows for the reception of the Holy Spirit who effects Christ-like love in those who receive him. But, as he transitions from the oil on Aaron's beard to the tunic that enrobes the body of Aaron/Christ, Augustine clarifies that love is not only the result of ecclesial unity but the cause of it as well.

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47. The μόνος definition ought also to evoke the classic *unus/unum* distinction based on John 10:30. Though Augustine does not use it explicitly here, he will, twenty years later, employ it in his reading of Acts 4:32 at *c. Max.* 2.20.1–2.22.2.

48. *en. Ps.* 132.7. This "flow" of the Spirit from the Son is indicative of a trinitarian dynamic of inseparable operations that I will discuss in more depth in the next chapter. The image of the Spirit as oil being poured out may build upon pro-Nicene arguments from common operations in Ambrose. See esp. *spir.* 1.9.100–104. See also Augustine, *trin.* 15.26.46, who uses Acts 10:38 as Ambrose does to puzzle out what it means for Christ to be anointed with the Holy Spirit.

49. *en. Ps.* 132.8.

Moving from the apostolic martyrs to his own contemporary church, Augustine investigates the significance of the tunic's hem. The hem signifies perfection and fulfillment of the law, which for Augustine is defined by Galatians 6:2, "Bear one another's burdens." The edges of the church are held together by charity, and this charity derives from the oil that flows from the head all the way to the seams. To elucidate—and at the same time complicate—this relationship between love and ecclesial unity, Augustine describes how Christ the head puts on his tunic, the church. "Those who live in unity are like this: just as when one puts his head through the border in order to dress himself, so through fraternal concord Christ enters, who is our head, that he might be clothed, that the church might cling to him."[50] So, on one hand, the presence of Christ as the head wrapped in the tunic allows the Holy Spirit to flow as oil from the head, to the beard, to the very hem of the tunic. On the other hand, the presence of that oil, the charity of the Holy Spirit, allows for Christ to be present in the church.

This long interpretation of the flowing oil[51] illustrates the divine origin of the ecclesial unity exemplified in Acts 4:32a. Returning to that text, Augustine clarifies,

> They do not live together in unity unless the charity of Christ has been perfected in them. For those in whom Christ's charity is not perfected—even if they live together in unity—are hateful, disruptive, and turbulent. . . . There are many brothers like this. They do not live together in unity except in a bodily sense. But who are those who do live together in unity? "And they were of one soul and one heart unto God; and no one called something his own possession, but they held everything in common." In this way are they designated and described, those who belong to the beard and to the hem of the tunic.[52]

Augustine's audience should take at least two things from this. First, this unity derived from love is not achieved through human effort. It is established by "Christ's charity," which he earlier identified as the anointing oil

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50. *en. Ps.* 132.9.

51. Augustine offers a similar interpretation of Acts 4:32 with Ps 132.2 against the Donatists in *c. litt. Pet.* 2.104.239.

52. *en. Ps.* 132.12.

of the Holy Spirit. Second, and perhaps because of this, it does not matter if not everyone in the church achieves this perfect love because there exists a hem of Christians who do have Christ's charity, securing the integrity of the church. Augustine has the monks in mind here, and he admits that not even all Catholic monks are embodiments of true charity. But he can still defend the necessary role that such communities play as manifestations of the unity that Christ's charity (or the Holy Spirit, in some passages) establishes within the wider church.

Reading this sermon alongside Augustine's use of Acts 4:32a in *Io. ev. tr.* 14.9 suggests a connection between the unity of the ecclesial community and the unity of the divine persons. In both cases, Augustine uses Acts 4:32a to explicate what it means for multiple persons to be somehow one. In the etymological discussion of "monk," he deploys an argument for "natural" unity very similar to that of Hilary, whereby incorporation into the singular person and new humanity of Christ constitutes the unity of "one heart and soul." Moreover, Augustine connects this ecclesial unity to trinitarian unity through the presence of the Spirit who is charity. In *Io. ev. tr.* 14.9, God is the summit of charity, and that absolute charity constitutes the simple unity of the divine persons. Here in *en. Ps.* 132, charity, interpreted as the Spirit given by Christ to those joined to his body, establishes unity within the church. This is the unity that the Donatists lack who "refuse to live in unity with their brothers . . . [and] have abandoned Christ to follow Donatus."[53]

Thus, in his appropriation of the Latin pro-Nicene reading of Acts 4:32a, Augustine draws a parallel between the unity of the triune persons and the unity of the church. The core of this parallel is the operation of love that establishes unity in both instances. This emphasis on the unitive work of love allows Augustine to condemn the Donatists for failing to love by refusing to remain united with the Catholic church. In the next section, my goal is to show that Augustine understands the unity of the church to be constituted by the Spirit, who gives to the church what he eternally is: the love that is the unity of the Father and Son. Though Augustine's use of Acts 4:32a in *en. Ps.* 132 suggests this pneumatological connection, I turn now to his use of Romans 5:5, which verifies and clarifies this connection by uniting the eternal identity and redemptive work of the Spirit.

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53. *en. Ps.* 132.6.

The Spirit of Love

In his interpretation of Romans 5:5 in our sermon series, Augustine identifies the Spirit as the love that constitutes unity in both the Trinity and the church. In so doing, Augustine makes the unity of the church in love a participation in the love and unity of the Trinity through the work of the Spirit. To unpack how Augustine does this, I first describe how Ambrose establishes a pro-Nicene reading of the verse based on common and inseparable operations that connects the redemptive work of the Spirit to an understanding of his eternal divinity. Next I turn to Augustine's early articulation of the Spirit as the mutual love of Father and Son to demonstrate how he appropriates Ambrose's reading of Romans 5:5, maintaining the connection between the redemptive work of the Spirit and the Spirit's eternal identity without making the ecclesial connection explicit. Finally, I trace Augustine's use of Romans 5:5 in our sermon series to show how he comes to establish the connection between the unity of the Trinity and that of the church through the work of the Holy Spirit, who gives what he eternally is.

Ambrose's Pro-Nicene Reading of Romans 5:5

Romans 5:5 is Augustine's most quoted verse, but it does not have a rich history in the North African ecclesial tradition prior to him. The verse shows up twice in the works of Cyprian. In both instances, Cyprian appeals to the wider pericope of Romans 5:3–5 to encourage hope in the face of suffering.[54] Augustine also makes use of the passage in this way.[55] Beyond this, though, Romans 5:5 does not enter into North African ecclesiological discussions, aside from Augustine's use of it.

As with Acts 4:32a, however, Romans 5:5 has a relevant tradition of interpretation in Latin pro-Nicenes. Augustine draws his use of this verse against the Donatists from this tradition. For the purposes of this study, the most significant pre-Augustinian use of Romans 5:5 comes from Ambrose's *On the Holy Spirit* (*spir.*).[56] Here Ambrose establishes a

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54. Cyprian, *Fort.* 9; *Quir.* 3.6.

55. *vera rel.* 47.92; *agon.* 7.8. When he makes a similar use of Rom 5:3–5 in *s. Dom. mon.* 1.13, Augustine clarifies that schismatics do not receive this benefit through their supposed persecution.

56. Hilary does not seem to know Rom 5:5, which is odd, given his emphasis on the Spirit as "gift."

connection between the redemptive work of the Spirit and the Spirit's eternal divinity through arguments of common and inseparable operations, which Augustine will appropriate in his use of Romans 5:5.

Ambrose deploys Romans 5:5 three times in the first book of *spir.* All three uses occur within arguments of common and inseparable operations.[57] Ambrose first cites Romans 5:5 as an example of a scriptural text that mentions the grace of the Spirit, but not that of Father or of Son. Nevertheless, such grace can be predicated of Father and of Son because "when some divine operation is designated either of the Father or of the Son or of the Spirit, it is referred not only to the Holy Spirit but also to the Father, nor is it referred only to the Father, but also to the Son and to the Spirit."[58] This interpretive rule expresses the principle of inseparable operations and undercuts any binitarian or subordinationist reading of scripture texts that lack explicit mention of all three divine persons. This rule both guards and builds upon the simplicity of the divine nature.

In his second use of Romans 5:5, Ambrose moves more toward an argument of common operations:

> Therefore, God pours forth *of* the Spirit. Yet the charity of God is also poured forth *through* the Spirit. With this passage we ought to recognize the unity of the operation and of the grace. For just as God pours forth *of* the Holy Spirit, so also The charity of God is poured forth into our hearts *through* the Holy Spirit, so that we may understand that the Holy Spirit is not a work, who is the arbiter and overflowing font of divine charity.[59]

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57. Arguments from "common" and "inseparable" operations are easily confused and intermixed in pro-Nicene texts. For the sake of clarity, "common operations" means an argument that demonstrates the divinity of Son or Spirit by pointing out that he does a work that is constitutive of divinity or which he shares with the Father. "Inseparable operations" refers to an argument, often connected with the previous argument, that demonstrates how all three persons act in any given divine action, even if it seems that only one or two do it. For Augustine's understanding and use of inseparable operations, see Lewis Ayres, " 'Remember That You Are Catholic' (*serm.* 52.2): Augustine on the Unity of the Triune God," *JECS* 8, no. 1 (2000): 39–82.

58. Ambrose, *spir.* 1.3.40.

59. Ambrose, *spir.* 1.8.94. Didymus, *spir.* 49–50, which Ambrose knew well, offers a similar argument. For Didymus, the language of "pouring forth" indicates the Spirit's divinity. To be poured forth by God, the Spirit must be in some way "part" of God.

Ambrose here focuses on the agency of the Holy Spirit in the giving and operation of divine love. Not only is the Spirit given, but he is also the giver. This allows the Spirit to be on the "divine" side of the "divine/created" divide because of his divine work of giving grace and love, which are here also closely connected to the presence of the Holy Spirit himself in that gift.

Finally, Ambrose alludes to Romans 5:5 in one of the most evocative passages for students of Augustine's pneumatology. Ambrose argues that Father, Son, and Spirit all have a single peace, a single grace, and a single "charity and communion."[60] Based on John 14:21—"He that loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him"—Ambrose wants to prove that Father and Son have a single love. He further elucidates this by explaining that this common love is exemplified in the handing over of the Son in the incarnation and passion. The Father hands over the Son, and the Son also hands over himself, based on Romans 8:32 and Galatians 2:20.[61] Ambrose can include the Spirit in this giving of the Son by way of Matthew 4:1, in which Jesus is "led by the Spirit." Ambrose concludes,

> Therefore the Spirit also loved the Son of God and handed him over. For just as the charity of the Father and of the Son is one, so have we declared that this charity of God is poured forth abroad through the Holy Spirit and is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, since "the fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience" (Gal 5:22).[62]

For those looking for the source of Augustine's pneumatology in Ambrose, this passage seems promising. But Ambrose's argument is simpler than the pneumatology that Augustine will develop, and it is more in line with his earlier use of Romans 5:5 to prove common and inseparable operations than it is with any Augustinian concept of the *proprium* of the Spirit. It is a manifestation of what Ayres calls "Ambrose's most basic picture of the divine nature . . . [namely] a unitary nature exhibiting a unitary power."[63]

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60. Ambrose, *spir.* 1.12.128.

61. The verb Ambrose uses is *tradere*, which will take on special significance when Augustine appropriates the argument against the Donatists who accuse the Catholics of being *traditores*. See below, pp. 139–140.

62. Ambrose, *spir.* 1.12.130.

63. Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 263. For more on this relationship between nature and power, see Chapter 4 of this volume, esp. pp. 160–169.

However, Ambrose's use of Romans 5:5 in *spir.* to defend the unity of divine love sets an exegetical precedent that Augustine will develop to his own ends. In each of these instances from *spir.*, Ambrose proves the divinity of the Spirit by the redemptive work of "pouring forth," both the pouring forth *of* the Spirit and the pouring forth *through* the Spirit. The Spirit is both giver and gift, and even though Ambrose is more concerned to affirm the Spirit's divine agency in giving, this connection between the divinity and work of the Spirit will guide Augustine's appropriation of Romans 5:5 and will serve as the bridge between divine and ecclesial unity.[64] I turn now to an early use of Romans 5:5 in Augustine to set the stage for the development that appears in our sermon series.

De fide et symbolo 9.19–10.21: The Spirit as Love and the Church That Loves

Augustine preached *On Faith and the Creed* (*f. et symb.*) in 393, while still a priest, at a synod of bishops assembled in Hippo. At this point, over a decade before our sermon series, Augustine already uses Romans 5:5 to articulate the eternal *proprium* of the Spirit as the love and unity of the Father and Son, in a manner indebted to Ambrose and connecting the redemptive work of the Spirit to his intra-trinitarian identity. Though Augustine leaves the connection between the Spirit's *proprium* and his work in the church rather vague, this passage from 393 will underscore the development in this connection that Augustine evinces in his use of Romans 5:5 in our sermon series.

For *f. et symb.*, Augustine takes as his topic an exposition of the creed, not that of Nicaea, but a baptismal formula possibly related to the Old Roman Creed.[65] This is the fullest exposition of Augustine's early

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64. Aside from its use in *f. et symb.* 9.19 (discussed below) and at *trin.* 8.7, 13.10, 15.9, the only explicitly "anti-Arian" use of the verse is in Augustine's *c. s. Ar.* 25.21. The argument here is against those who would read Rom 8:26–27, in which the Spirit pleads on behalf of the saints, as signifying the subordination of the Spirit. Augustine uses Rom 5:5 to illustrate how the Spirit makes us plead through his indwelling. For significant uses of Rom 5:5 in anti-Donatist treatises, see *bapt.* 3.16.21; *Cresc.* 2.12.15, 2.15.18. These emphasize that the true presence of the Spirit is manifest in the love that unites one to the church, a theme that I will show below is connected to his trinitarian theology of the Spirit in our sermon series.

65. See E. P. Meijering, *Augustine, De fide et symbolo. Introduction, Translation, Commentary* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1987), 8–12.

understanding of the Trinity. Moreover, Augustine offers here his earliest explicit discussion of the Holy Spirit as the mutual love of Father and Son.

In a much-discussed chapter, Augustine turns his attention to identifying the *proprium* of the Holy Spirit, "what constitutes him as he is, so that we are able to state that he is neither the Father nor the Son but the Holy Spirit only."[66] Augustine frames his investigation as a discussion of what earlier pro-Nicene authors—"those learned and eminent expositors of sacred scripture"—have said on the subject. By the late fourth century, pro-Nicenes had become good at arguments from common operations that demonstrate the necessary divinity of the Holy Spirit from his divine acts, but they had yet to find a clear way to highlight the irreducibility of the Spirit's person.[67] In seeking the *proprium* of the Holy Spirit, Augustine attempts to fill this lacuna.

After rehearsing some formulations whereby the Holy Spirit is negatively defined as neither the Son nor the Father, Augustine turns to some of the positive attempts to identify the unique *proprium* of the Spirit:

> Nevertheless some have dared to believe that the Holy Spirit is the very communion of Father and Son and, so to speak, the deity, which the Greeks call θεότητα, so that, since the Father is God and the Son is God, the deity itself, by which they are bound to each other, both the one in begetting the Son and the other in clinging to the Father, is equal to the one [the Father] by whom the other [the Son] is begotten. They say, therefore, that this deity, which they wish to be understood as the mutual love and charity of both, is called the Holy Spirit, and they bring forth many proofs from scripture to support their opinion, either where it is written, "Since the charity of God is poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us" (Rom 5:5), or many other such witnesses. And because we are reconciled to God through the Holy Spirit, they wish, whenever scripture refers to the gift of God, that this would be sufficient

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66. *f. et symb.* 9.19. For discussions of this passage, see, inter alia, Gerber, *The Spirit of Augustine's Early Theology*, 1–2; Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 86–92; Olivier Du Roy, *L'Intelligence de la Foi en la Trinité selon saint Augustin: Genèse de sa théologie trinitaire jusqu'en 391* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1966), 486–487.

67. See Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 89; Ayres, "*Spiritus Amborum*," 209.

indication that the Holy Spirit is the charity of God. For we are only reconciled to God by love.[68]

Scholars have spent considerable effort trying to discern who the "some" are that Augustine claims identify the Spirit as "the very communion" and "mutual love and charity" of Father and Son. It seems to represent not so much a single discrete source but an amalgamation of Latin pro-Nicenes, including Ambrose's use of Romans 5:5 that I have just discussed.[69]

Augustine's idiosyncratic appropriation of the Latin pro-Nicene tradition produces three things worth noting in the above passage. First, Augustine parallels "divinity" with "charity." He elucidates the relationship between divinity and charity in the next paragraph by reference to 1 John 4:8,16, "God is love"; "He does not say that love is God, but that God is love, so that the deity itself would be understood to be love."[70] Augustine appropriates to the Spirit a title that is common to the whole Trinity, in a way that the names "Father" and "Son" are not. Part of his warrant for this is the very term "Spirit," which has a tradition in Latin theology of being treated as either a synonym for "God" (as in John 4:24) or even as signifying the Son.[71] Thus the Spirit already has a name that is attributable in some way to the other persons, a fact that reflects the way in which the Spirit is indeed the Spirit of both the Father and the Son. By using the terms "deity" and "charity" to name the *proprium* of the Spirit, Augustine highlights this ambiguous identity of the Spirit but translates that ambiguity into what is unique about the Spirit. The Spirit is of the Father and of the Son in such a way that we may speak of him, by way of appropriation, as that which they have in common, the very divinity of the Trinity—not as some substance behind Father and Son, but as the substance that all

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68. *f. et symb.* 9.19.

69. Ayres and du Roy both look to *spir.* 3.10.59, where Ambrose combines Peter's discourse with Ananias about lying to the Spirit/God in Acts 5 with John 3:6, "the Spirit is God." See Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 88–89; and du Roy, *L'Intelligence de la foi*, 486–487. I add the previously discussed sections of *spir.* 1 to this list, especially 1.12.130, in which the Spirit is included in the common charity of Father and Son. Though Ambrose does not identify the Spirit with that common charity, this way of reading Rom 5:5 may easily lead to the use of that verse here in *f. et symb.*, in our sermon series, and in *trin.* See also Marius Victorinus, *hymn.* 1.3, 3.35–42, 3.242–247; *adv. Ar.* 4.4.

70. *f. et symb.* 9.19. By 407, Augustine will come to claim that we can in fact say "love is God." See my discussion of *ep. Io.* 7.5–11 below, pp. 136–141.

71. See Tertullian, *adv. Prax.* 26–27; Hilary, *trin.* 8.23.

three are. The mutual love of Father and Son, then, is nothing less than the divinity that they share, though not in such a way that the divinity is external or prior to either Father and Son.

Second, Augustine identifies both divinity and charity as that which unites Father and Son. This points to one of the chief operations of the Spirit and of love in Augustine's theology. Later in this same paragraph, when expounding upon Romans 11:36—"from him and through him and in him"—Augustine glosses "in him" to mean "in him who holds together, that is, joins together in union."[72] The triadic formula suggests that this is to be understood as the work of the Holy Spirit. This description also evokes the work that love performs in the summary passage of *en. Ps.* 121.10–13 that I have discussed above. In the context of the present passage, this identification of the Spirit as that which "joins together in unity" is meant as a response to those who would say it is inappropriate "when speaking of things which are connected to each other, to enumerate the connection itself."[73] In refuting this objection, Augustine highlights uniting and holding together as the proper operations of the Spirit. Given the context of clarifying what it means to call the Spirit the "mutual love" and "deity" of the Father and Son, it is apparent that, for Augustine, love is at least partly understood as that which unites things together, again lining up well with the depiction of love in *en. Ps.* 121.10–13.

Third, Augustine connects this work of "uniting" to both the eternal *proprium* and the redemptive work of the Holy Spirit. We see this especially in the way Augustine turns to Romans 5:5 to support the identification of the Holy Spirit with the love of God as well as in the connection to "gift" pneumatology, which most likely echoes Hilary of Poitiers.[74] As Augustine seeks for what distinguishes the person of the Spirit in the eternal Trinity, he sees this question as intimately related to the work of the Spirit within our salvation. Specifically, the Holy Spirit as the love of God (both subjectively and objectively) reconciles us to God. Augustine goes on in the same chapter to clarify that this love that is received in the gift of the Spirit allows for the enjoyment of God's wisdom, which "is nothing other than to cling to it in love, and no one remains in what he perceives

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72. *f. et symb.* 9.19.

73. *f. et symb.* 9.19.

74. Hilary, *trin.* 8.29–34.

except through love."[75] Again, then, the uniting work of the love of God lies at the forefront of Augustine's mind. Not only does Augustine identify the Spirit as the love and the common divinity of Father and Son, but this same Spirit as love allows the human soul to be united in contemplation of God, the beatific goal of our salvation.[76]

Though this passage has garnered much critical attention, little focus has been given to the section on the church that comes immediately after it. However, the movement from pneumatology to ecclesiology there suggests the connections that Augustine will only fully develop in our sermon series. It is, therefore, a passage worth taking time to unpack.

Following the path of the creed, Augustine moves fluidly from discussion of the Spirit to discussion of the church. He connects the two topics via 1 Corinthians 13:12 and Matthew 5:8. In seeking to identify the *proprium* of the Spirit, Augustine cautions against too much speculation based upon limited human knowledge:

> Let us not rashly affirm anything about invisible things as if we really knew them, but as believing, since such things are not able to be seen except by a clean heart. Even if someone sees these things in this life "in part," as it is said, and "in an enigma" (1 Cor 13:12), he is not able to cause one to whom he speaks to see it as well, if that person is impeded by a dirty heart. Nevertheless, "Blessed are the clean of heart for they will see God" (Matt 5:8). This is the faith about God, our creator and renewer.[77]

Love, through the purification of the heart, allows for sight and knowledge of God, a theme central to Augustine's preaching in our sermon series.[78] As he has established previously, this is the operation of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts, reforming and reorienting our love toward the true Good. But the double-love command of Luke 10:27 leads from love of God to love

75. *f. et symb.* 9.19.

76. On the Spirit as the unity of Father and Son who also unites us to God, see David Vincent Meconi, *The One Christ: St. Augustine's Theology of Deification* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 2013), 147–153.

77. *f. et symb.* 9.20.

78. See above, pp. 37–39.

of neighbor, and from reflection on the Spirit's *proprium* to reflection on the nature of the church:

> But since love not only of God was commanded of us ... but also of neighbor ... unless this faith preserves the congregation and fellowship of humans, in which fraternal charity operates, it is less fruitful. We, therefore, believe also in the holy church, which is the Catholic church. For both heretics and schismatics call their congregations "churches." But heretics violate the faith by their false opinions about God; the schismatics, however, fly away from fraternal charity because of unjust divisions, even though they believe what we believe. For this reason, the heretics do not belong to the Catholic church, since the church loves God, nor do the schismatics, since the church loves the neighbor.[79]

Faith in the Trinity, Augustine argues, must be rooted in the community because we learn to love properly within that community. Both heretics and schismatics fail to share in this love because the one has improper love of God and the other has improper love of neighbor. This early formulation of the distinction between heretics and schismatics retains the unifying Augustinian theme of improper love,[80] but Augustine does not yet make an explicit connection between love of God and love of neighbor by way of the Holy Spirit, as he does in our sermon series.

To summarize, in *f. et symb.* 9.19, Augustine reads Romans 5:5 in conjunction with 1 John 4:8,16 to identify the eternal *proprium* of the Spirit as the love that unites Father and Son. In addition, he connects this identification of the eternal *proprium* of the Spirit with the redemptive work of the Spirit's love in reconciling us with God. Augustine then goes on in 9.20–10.21 to speak of the church as a community from which heretics and schismatics are excluded due to their improper love. The connection between these two parts of the sermon is the necessary purification of the heart that will allow us to finally see those things of which we have only glimpses in this life. Beyond this purification, though, Augustine does not connect his meditation of the *proprium* of the Spirit to the proper

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79. *f. et symb.* 9.21–10.21.

80. Augustine makes a similar distinction at *en. Ps.* 120.12.

love that constitutes the community of the church. I will now trace the development of this connection by turning to three passages from our sermon series.

In Ioannis evangelium tractatus 9.7–8: The Spirit as Eternal and Redemptive Love

To trace the development of the connection between the Spirit's eternal *proprium* as love and the love that establishes unity in the church, I turn to three passages from our sermon series. In this first, *Io. ev. tr.* 9.7–8, Augustine demonstrates continuity with his use of Romans 5:5 in *f. et symb.* After establishing that Augustine still deploys this trinitarian use of Romans 5:5 in our sermon series in a way that is indebted to Ambrose, I will use two later passages from the series to show how he now uses Romans 5:5 to describe the Spirit as the agent of ecclesial unity and thus establishes the unity of the church through the Spirit's love as a participation in the unity and love of the triune God.

In *Io. ev. tr.* 9.7–8, Augustine identifies the Spirit as the love and unity of the Father and Son through a reading of Romans 5:5 that is consistent with *f. et symb.* This sermon explores the theological significance of Christ's presence and miracle at the wedding in Cana. Near the end, Augustine seeks the mystery hidden in the "two or three measures" that the jars hold. One solution he offers is a trinitarian reading that highlights the relationship of the Spirit to the Father and Son:

> If he had only said "three each," our minds would run nowhere but to the mystery of the Trinity. But perhaps we ought not so quickly turn our minds from that idea because he says, "two or three each." Because, having named the Father and Son, it follows that the Holy Spirit is to be understood as well. For the Holy Spirit is not only of the Father, nor is the Spirit only of the Son, but the Spirit is of the Father and of the Son. For it is written, "If one loves the world, the Spirit of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). Again it is written, "Whoever does not have the Spirit of Christ is not of Christ" (Rom 8:9). This same Spirit is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. So when the Father and Son are named, it is like two measures being named; but when the Holy Spirit is understood there, it is three measures. . . . It is as though he said, "When I say 'two each,' I want the Spirit of the Father and Son to be understood along with

them; and when I say 'three each,' I express the Trinity itself more clearly."[81]

Augustine thus establishes a rule for dealing with seemingly binitarian passages of scripture: any time scripture speaks of Father and Son, the Holy Spirit ought to be understood implicitly. This evokes Ambrose's use of Romans 5:5 in *spir.* 1.3.40, discussed above.[82] Significantly, Augustine builds this claim upon the Spirit's identity as "of" both Father and Son, referencing 1 John 2:15 and Romans 8:9 to prove his point. This is a pro-Nicene emphasis derived, likely, from Hilary, who also uses Romans 8:9 to make the same point.[83] Moreover, this understanding of the Spirit as that which is common to both Father and Son echoes Ambrose's identification of the Spirit as the very divinity of the Trinity, to which Augustine alludes in *f. et symb.* 9.19.[84]

Not surprisingly, then, Augustine continues by elucidating his own interpretation of what it means for the Spirit to be both of the Father and of the Son:

> And so anyone who names Father and Son ought to understand there also the mutual charity of Father and Son, which is the Holy Spirit. For perhaps when the scriptures are shaken out (and I am not saying that I would be able to show this today, or that another explanation could not be found), but nevertheless perhaps the scriptures, having been searched, will indicate that the Holy Spirit is charity. . . . For John did not hesitate to say, "God is charity" (1 John 4:8,16). It is also written, "The charity of God is poured forth into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who is given to us" (Rom 5:5). Who, therefore, could name Father and Son and not understand there the charity of Father and Son? And when one begins to have that charity, one will have the Holy Spirit; and if one does not have that charity, one will be without the Holy Spirit. And just as your body, if it is without spirit, which is your soul, is dead, so too your

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81. *Io. ev. tr.* 9.7.

82. See above, p. 123.

83. Hilary, *trin.* 8.24–26. See Ayres, "*Spiritus Amborum*," 210.

84. Ambrose, *spir.* 3.10.59.

soul, if it is without the Holy Spirit, that is, without charity, will be esteemed dead.[85]

Augustine makes three important moves in this passage. First, he moves from identifying the Spirit as that which is common to both Father and Son to identifying the Spirit as "the mutual charity of Father and Son." This is Augustine's preferred (and most famous) way of appropriating the earlier Latin tradition that had begun to speak of the Spirit as the unity or divinity of Father and Son. Second, Augustine defends this interpretation through a joint reading of 1 John 4:8,16 and Romans 5:5. This is likely the first time these two verses have appeared together in Augustine since his famous use of them at *f. et symb.* 9.19 in 393.[86] This passage, then, represents a significant moment when Augustine returns to the idea of the Spirit's *proprium* as the mutual love of Father and Son in order to work it out, again in a sermon. Third, in using these two verses, and in moving from 1 John 4 to Romans 5, Augustine connects his speculation about the intra-trinitarian *proprium* to the redemptive work of the Spirit in the individual soul. He explicitly identifies the Spirit that vivifies the soul as charity. This connection between the Spirit's eternal *proprium* and his redemptive work in reorienting the heart to God is consistent with the understanding of the Spirit as charity that Augustine offered in *f. et symb.* 9.19.

Augustine does not make the anti-Donatist significance of this passage explicit. It does, however, line up well with the anti-Donatist theology of love that he expounded just a few months earlier in the summary passage of *en. Ps.* 121.10–13. In that passage, the Donatists' lack of love was manifest in their refusal to participate in the peace of the earthly church that is established by the common love of those who desire the peace of the eternal city and a participation in God's own peace. Here Augustine identifies that divine work of love upon our soul that reorients our desire toward the peace of God as the Holy Spirit himself, poured out into our hearts.

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85. *Io. ev. tr.* 9.8.

86. Dating is always dicey in Augustine, but based on A.-M. La Bonnardière, Augustine does not cite these two verses together between these two texts. See La Bonnardière, "Le verset paulinien *Rom.*, V.5 dans l'oeuvre de saint Augustine," in *Augustinus Magister* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1956), 2:657–665, Of course, this conclusion requires a revision of La Bonnardière's dating of *Io. ev. tr.* 9 from 415 to 407 to reflect her own changes in *Recherches de Chronologie Augustinienne*, 43–53, ten years after her essay on Rom 5:5.

This suggests that the peace of God that we desire through the Spirit is connected perhaps to the peace of the church. Moreover, later in this same tractate, Augustine does explicitly condemn the Donatists, but not on the basis of Romans 5:5. Rather, he has moved to a meditation on the wedding of Christ and the church, from which the Donatists have been cast out for refusing to communicate with the wider world.[87]

So Augustine has the Donatists on his mind in this sermon, but he does not yet connect the love of the Holy Spirit to their failure to love in the peace of the Catholic church. He might intend a rhetorical juxtaposition between the more explicitly trinitarian reflection of 9.8 and the anti-Donatist polemic of the later paragraphs, from which his congregation might draw a connection between the refusal of the Donatists to communicate with the *catholicos* and the work of the Spirit that is the love of God in our hearts. In the next few sermons, Augustine will make this connection without any ambiguity.

Enarrationes in Psalmos 133: The Spirit of Ecclesial Love

In *en. Ps.* 133, Augustine makes explicit what was only suggested in *f. et symb.* 10.20, namely, that the Spirit is the love that establishes ecclesial unity, just as he is the love that constitutes the unity of Father and Son. Augustine accomplishes this through a reading of Romans 5:5 that connects the work of love in the unity and peace of the church to the work of love that raises us to God. Augustine thus moves a step closer to making the unity of the church a participation in the love and unity of the Trinity through the work of the Spirit who gives us what he eternally is.

En. Ps. 133 begins with an explanation of what it means to "stand in the courts of the house of God." The key for Augustine is that a court is "not cramped or crowded or squeezed but has plenty of room." This wideness is characteristic of love:

> Remain in this wide space and you will be able to love your enemy, because you are not in love with those things in which you might suffer crowding by your enemy. In what way ought you to understand this standing in the courts? Stand in charity, and you will

87. *Io. ev. tr.* 9.13.

stand in the courts. In charity there is a wide space, but in hatred there is cramped space.[88]

The wideness of the court signifies the wideness of love, the breadth that allows love to embrace the neighbor and not collapse in upon itself. Augustine further elucidates this "breadth of charity" through Paul's description in Romans 5:5 of the love of God that is the Holy Spirit poured abroad into our hearts: "When you hear 'poured abroad,' understand a wide space, and when you hear 'wide space,' understand the courts of the Lord. You will have the true blessing of the Lord when you do not curse your enemies."[89] The gift of the Holy Spirit, of God's own love, enables us to be present in the courts of the heavenly Jerusalem, because, as we have seen, by that love we ascend to God. But Augustine is clear that the manifestation of that love is present here on earth, in the broadening of the individual's love. To love even one's enemies is to stand in that heavenly city itself. Love, like Christ, is both the *patria* and the *via*, our homeland and the road toward it.

But Augustine clarifies that this type of broad love has an ecclesial focus. He moves from singing the praises of love to expounding the nature of ecclesial unity. The psalmist declares that "many bless the Lord, but he blesses his servants as one." This brings Augustine back to his perennial theme of the *unus homo*, who is the church united in Christ: "Many are exhorted to bless the Lord, but the Lord blesses only one, because he has made one out of the many. . . . He blessed one only. Be in that one, and then the blessing will have come to you."[90] This is Augustine's final word on the Psalms of Ascent, and it sums up the ecclesiological nature of our ascent to the heavenly Jerusalem, to participation in God's own peace.

If, as I have shown earlier, the soul moves by love toward that goal, and if one operation of love is to establish peace, then to seek the peace and unity of the church on earth is part of the operation of the same love that will bring us to our heavenly peace. Love works to reform the individual's desire. For Augustine, a refusal to be a part of unity signifies a desire that is still oriented toward the narrow interest of the individual, not opened up like the wide courts to seek the good of the neighbor. Augustine thus

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88. *en. Ps.* 133.1.

89. *en. Ps.* 133.1.

90. *en. Ps.* 133.3.

identifies the love that unites Christians to each other and that allows for participation in the heavenly Jerusalem as the work of the Holy Spirit.

This use of Romans 5:5 in *en. Ps.* 133 moves closer to explaining the connection between divine and ecclesial unity that Augustine establishes in his reading of Acts 4:32a. Here the gift of the Spirit as the love of God is manifest in the uniting of Christians in the peace of the church. This gathering and uniting work of love operates as part of the same love's work in raising the church as *unus homo* to God. I turn now to a sermon on 1 John in which Augustine makes explicit the connection between divine and ecclesial unities in the love of the Holy Spirit.

In epistulam Ioannis ad Parthos tractatus 7.5–11: The Trinitarian Unity of Divine and Ecclesial Love

Augustine's seventh sermon on 1 John offers one of the most explicit demonstrations of the larger thesis of this book, that Augustine grounds his anti-Donatist ecclesiology in his appropriation of Latin pro-Nicene theology in order to establish the life of the church as a manifestation of and participation in the life of the Trinity. In this homily, Augustine moves back and forth between training his audience in basic pro-Nicene principles and upholding the charitable unity of the church against the Donatists. Analysis of this sermon, then, is a proper conclusion to my exploration of Romans 5:5. Here Augustine brings together many of the interpretive threads I have discussed in his previous uses of the verse, and in doing so he makes his most explicit use of Ambrose's trinitarian reading of the verse while still turning the focus to the paramount role of love in the church through the redemptive work of the Spirit.

This sermon brings Augustine's exposition of 1 John to the famous claim of 4:8: "God is love." Augustine has read this verse with Romans 5:5 in his *f. et symb.* In that earlier passage, Augustine emphasizes that the order of the words implies that God is love, but love is not God. This, he says, signifies that the divinity itself is to be understood as love and therefore is a fitting appropriation to the Spirit, who is already named as that which is common to the divine nature of Father and Son. Now, though, Augustine dares to claim that love is God in a way he was reticent to do fourteen years earlier.[91] This inversion allows Augustine to draw a much

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91. On this reversal, see Teske, "Augustine's Inversion"; and van Bavel, "The Double Face of Love," 172–177.

closer connection between the love that is manifest in human (especially ecclesial) relationships and the love that is the divinity of the Trinity and that is particularly identified as the Spirit. A strong identification of love with God permits Augustine to deploy some of his most damning anti-Donatist rhetoric, equating a failure to love one's neighbor with a sin against the God who is love itself.

Augustine makes this connection through an intricate analysis of what it means to name love as God. When Augustine cites Romans 5:5, he does so to puzzle out the relationship between 1 John 4:7, "Love is from God," and 1 John 4:8, "God is love." He responds with a pro-Nicene reading of the phrase "God from God (*deus ex deo*)" to parse the eternal relations of the persons in the Trinity:

> For God is Father and Son and Holy Spirit. The Son is God from God; the Holy Spirit is God from God; and these three are one God, not three gods. *If the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God, and he in whom the Holy Spirit dwells loves (*ille diligit in quo habitat Spiritus Sanctus*), then love is God, but it is God because it is from God.* For you have each one in the epistle—both "love is from God" and "love is God." Of the Father alone scripture cannot say that he is from God. But when you hear "from God," either the Son or the Holy Spirit is understood. But because the Apostle says, "the charity of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us," we should understand that in love there is the Holy Spirit.[92]

Augustine connects his inversion of 1 John 4:8 to a pro-Nicene grammar of divine procession, *deus ex deo*.[93] For Augustine, the juxtaposition of "from God" and "is God" signifies that love, like the Son and Spirit, can be described in this double manner. The phrase I have placed in italics is key to the logic connecting love to God. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit manifests itself in love in such a way that love itself can be identified with the Holy Spirit and therefore with God. But, love is God only as

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92. *ep. Io.* 7.6. The most recent English translation, that of Ramsey (*WSA* 1.14, 108), obscures the sense of the italicized passage, making it unclear that it is the presence of the Holy Spirit that makes one love. The *NPNF* version is more faithful to the sense of the Latin.

93. See Augustine, *trin.* 2.1.2, 15.17.29–31; Marius Victorinus, *adv. Ar.* 1A.47, 2.3, 2.6–7, 2.10–12, 4.29–31; Ambrose, *fid.* 1.3.23, 1.17.108–110, 1.18.118.

being from God. Much as the Son's divinity is rooted in the unbegotten Father in such a way as to have a single divinity, so love's divinity is not independent of its divine source, but is eternally and simply identical with it. This adds a caveat to Augustine's "daring inversion" of 1 John 4:8. Augustine does not make a god out of love; rather, he clarifies the divine source of all true love.

Augustine turns to Romans 5:5 as a further demonstration that love as from God is most appropriately identified with the Spirit. More than a proof-text, though, Romans 5:5 serves as a transition text between Augustine's pro-Nicene theology and his anti-Donatist polemic. Once Augustine uses this verse to cement his understanding of the Spirit as the person to whom love as God ought to be appropriated, he can then apply it to a reinterpretation of sacramental theology against the Donatists. If the Spirit is the love of God, then

> the Holy Spirit is he whom the wicked are not able to receive. He is that font of which scripture says, "Let the font of your water be your own, and let no stranger have a part in you" (Prv 5:16–17).[94] . . . A wicked person can also have this sacrament . . . but a person cannot be wicked and also have charity. This is, therefore, a particular gift; it is the singular font. The Spirit of God exhorts you to drink from it; the Spirit of God exhorts you to drink from himself.[95]

Augustine thus connects his trinitarian reflection on God as love to the reception of the Spirit in baptism, a key bone of contention in North African ecclesiological disputes. Love evinces the presence of the Spirit in a Christian and, as I demonstrated with Acts 4:32a, love establishes unity and peace within the church.

Augustine here establishes a close connection between an understanding of pro-Nicene principles and a proper understanding of the church. A meditation on what it means for God to be love leads Augustine to an explication of the Spirit's eternal *proprium* as that divine love. But the texts that Augustine uses to explore the eternal *proprium* of the Spirit,

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94. Here Augustine may be echoing Ambrose's discussion of *fons* at *spir.* 1.16. Though the imagery is similar, it is not close enough to argue true dependence. It is no doubt a contributor to the theological imagination that shapes Augustine's thought here. For Augustine's discussion of *fons* and his use of Prov 5:16–17 against the Donatists, see *c. Cresc.* 2.14.17.

95. *ep. Io.* 7.6.

particularly Acts 4:32a and Romans 5:5, describe the redemptive work of the Spirit. The key here is that the work of the Spirit in redemption manifests who the Spirit eternally is. And, as with the flesh of Christ, we come to know the eternal divinity of the Spirit not in spite of his redemptive work but through it. Because of this, Augustine's engagement with questions of sacramental efficacy begins with a pro-Nicene theology of who the Spirit is, whom, all agree, lies at the heart of baptismal theology.[96]

In 7.7, Augustine pivots back to the more explicit pro-Nicene reflections with which he began 7.6. Here he appropriates Ambrose's argument for the common and inseparable love of the triune persons that I noted earlier in *spir.* 1.12.[97] Both Augustine and Ambrose use Romans 8:32 and Galatians 2:20 to demonstrate that the Father and the Son both "hand over (*tradit*)" the Son in the incarnation and crucifixion. For both bishops, this shared operation manifests the common love with which both Father and Son act in giving the Son. Whereas Ambrose brings in Matthew 4:1 and Romans 5:5 to prove that the Spirit also gives the Son and has a common love with Father and Son, Augustine, having already identified the Spirit as most appropriately the love that is God in the previous section, does not include an explicit reference to the Spirit. But the context of the argument suggests that Augustine is explicating what it means for the Spirit who is love to be the love that is common to both Father and Son.

As with the discussion of the work of the Spirit in 7.6, Augustine here adapts Ambrose to his anti-Donatist polemic. Both Augustine and Ambrose, following the Latin of Galatians 2:20 and Romans 8:32, describe the Son and Father as "handing over," using the verb *tradere*. Augustine, reflecting his North African context, emphasizes the dual meaning of the verb:

> See the Father handed over Christ, and Judas handed over Christ. Does not the deed seem similar? Judas is a *traditor*. Is the Father, therefore, also a *traditor*? ... If the Father handed over the Son, and the Son handed himself over, what did Judas do? A *traditio*

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96. The question of baptism is only tangential to this chapter; it will take center stage in the next.

97. See above, p. 124.

was brought about by the Father; a *traditio* was brought about by the Son; and a *traditio* was brought about by Judas. One thing was brought about. But what distinguishes between the Father handing over his Son, the Son handing over himself, and the disciple handing over his master? That the Father and the Son did this in charity, but Judas did it in treason.[98]

This revision of Ambrose's argument leads to Augustine's famous declaration, "Love, and do what you wish."[99] Augustine's exaltation of the "root of love" derives from his trinitarian examination of the source of that love. The love from which "nothing but good can come" is that divine love identified with the Holy Spirit who is poured forth in Romans 5:5. Father and Son share this same love in their united operation of charitable *traditio*. Judas lacks this same love in his wicked *traditio*. By focusing on this word, Augustine challenges the language by which Donatists condemn the Catholics as the church of the *traditores*, and he reorients the moral discussion toward the interior disposition of the individual Christian. He then connects this interior disposition to the very love with which Father and Son operate, the Holy Spirit.

In the remaining paragraphs of the homily, Augustine yokes this trinitarian love more closely to his anti-Donatist ecclesiology. Not only does he redefine the nature and root of sin as a lack of the gift of divine love in the Spirit, but he then explains why Donatists cannot truly participate in that love so long as they remain outside the Catholic church. He clarifies this point by returning, by way of 1 John 4:12 ("No one has ever seen God"), to the epistemological concerns I discussed in the previous chapter. Here, Augustine trains his audience to cleanse their minds of corporeal conceptions of God. God is seen not by the eyes of the body but by the heart. This leads to the question of how one is to approach contemplation of God. "This is what you ought to think of if you wish to see God: 'God is love.' What type of appearance does love have? What type of form does it have? What type of stature does it have? What type of feet does it have? What type of hands does it have? No one can say. Nevertheless it has feet for they lead to the church. . . ."[100] While he praises such love, Augustine's

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98. *ep. Io.* 7.7.

99. *ep. Io.* 7.8.

100. *ep. Io.* 7.10.

audience becomes loud with applause, leading Augustine to affirm that, though they see nothing with their eyes, they still recognize the good of love in their hearts. The pursuit and possession of this love will lead to sight of the God who is love.[101]

Concluding this exhortation to seek in love for the God who is love, Augustine condemns those who do not follow the feet of that love to the church. In the final paragraph, Augustine turns the full force of his theology of love against the Donatists: "Those who violate charity have created a schism."[102] Having established the divine nature of love as the eternal *proprium* of the Spirit, having elaborated the way in which that love is the shared operation of all three members of the Trinity, and having connected the life of the church to that love through his reading of Romans 5:5, Augustine can now describe the Donatists as rejecting that very charity by not showing it to their fellow Christians and failing to partake in the unity of the church. This represents the joining of the gift of the Spirit in Romans 5:5 to the proper understanding of uniting love found in Augustine's reading of Acts 4:32a. Love unites many people into one heart. And that uniting love in this world is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The eternal identity and redemptive work of the Spirit, whereby he is the eternal love of Father and Son as well as the love that establishes unity in the church through the Spirit's indwelling, connect the life of the church to the life of the Trinity. The unity of the church is a participation in the unity of God because the very same Spirit who is the unitive love of the triune God unites the church.

Conclusion

Augustine appropriates pro-Nicene readings of Acts 4:32a and Romans 5:5 in order to articulate an anti-Donatist theology of love. He offers a vision of a church not defined by purity or sinlessness,[103] but by the love given

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101. See also *ep. Io.* 5.7, 6.9–12, 8.12, 9.10.

102. *ep. Io.* 7.11.

103. This is of course a caricature of actual Donatist self-understanding, as Maureen Tilley has argued in depth. See Tilley, *The Bible in North Africa: The Donatist World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997). See especially her conclusion, which emphasizes the image of the *collecta* as the true enduring model for "Donatist stability and cohesion" (180). Yet in my effort to understand Augustine better, I must accept his caricature as a preliminary step to appreciating how he attempts to defeat it.

in the Holy Spirit. Augustine intimately ties this love that establishes the unity of the church to his trinitarian theology of the love and unity of the divine persons. His construal of the Spirit as the mutual love of Father and Son derives in part from these two texts, which he also employs to demonstrate the necessary unity of the church through that very same love. Augustine thus makes the unity of the church a matter not of personal action on the part of bishops or even of the wider ecclesial community but of the redemptive work of God in the giving of the Spirit. The fact that the church in receiving the Spirit receives the very love that is God points to a way in which the life of the church, united in love, shares in the life of the Trinity. Although, like Ambrose, Augustine emphasizes that the unity experienced by created humans, especially in this world, is not the same as that of the divine persons, the latter is still the source of the former. This is due to the unity of the Spirit's eternal identity and redemptive work. He gives to us what he is. Separation from the unity of the church then demonstrates the lack of that love that God is.

The pneumatological dimension of unity that I have explored in this chapter ought to be read in concert with the Christological dimension that I examined in the previous one. The unity that the love of the Holy Spirit effects is the unity of the body of Christ. Augustine himself suggests as much in his penultimate homily on 1 John:

> Let us not turn aside from the way. Let us hold onto the unity of the church. Let us hold onto Christ. Let us hold onto charity. Let us not be torn away from the members of his bride. Let us not be torn away from the faith, so that we may glory in his presence, and we shall remain secure in him, now through faith and then through sight, the pledge of which we have in the gift of the Holy Spirit.[104]

The language of moving from faith to sight connects the unifying work of love to the same Christological ascent I described in the previous chapter. The connection between the love that unites the church, the love that ascends to God, and the love that unites the members of the Trinity, all brought about by the work and identity of the Spirit, ought to be understood as part of that single ascent of the one Christ.

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104. *ep. Io.* 9.11.

One indication of the inseparability of these themes—and the inseparable nature of all triune operations—is that Augustine elsewhere describes the cultivation of love as the work of the Son.[105] I turn next to this theme of the common and inseparable operations of Father, Son, and Spirit as they relate to the key issue of baptism.

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105. See my discussion of Acts 9:4 and the cultivation of humility within the body of Christ above, pp. 90–98. For a discussion of the inability to separate neatly pneumatological and Christological actions, see Robert Dodaro, "Augustine on the Roles of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Mediation of Virtues," *AugStud* 41, no. 1 (2010): 155–163; and Lewis Ayres, "Augustine on the Spirit as the Soul of the Body," *AugStud* 41, no. 1 (2010): 181–182.

4

The Unity of Baptism

Introduction

Accounts of the Donatist schism often characterize it as a dispute over baptism.[1] Although this is a bit reductive and does not reflect the breadth, depth, and plurality of Donatism in its first hundred years, it is not an entirely unhelpful characterization. Many issues were at stake, including

1. There are two significant strands of recent scholarship on Augustine's anti-Donatist theology of baptism that provide the context for my own contribution in this chapter. The first is represented by a series of articles by J. Patout Burns, including "Baptism as Dying and Rising with Christ in the Teaching of Augustine," *JECS* 20, no. 3 (2012): 407–438; and "Christ and the Holy Spirit in Augustine's Theology of Baptism," in *Augustine: From Rhetor to Theologian*, ed. Joanne McWilliam (Toronto: Laurier University Press, 1992), 161–171. In both of these articles, Burns parses Augustine's theological language to clarify the mechanisms whereby sins are forgiven, both in the sacrament of baptism and in the love of the saints who maintain unity in the church. Burns focuses on the agency of Christ and the gift and work of the Spirit to demonstrate that Augustine eventually separates the baptizing agency of Christ from the sin-forgiving work of the Spirit in order to validate schismatic baptisms, while at the same time necessitating the return of schismatics to the unity of the church in order to receive the forgiveness of sins that baptism traditionally effects. I generally agree with Burns's analysis, but I believe that much of what Burns observes in Augustine can be enhanced by an appreciation of Augustine's appropriation of pro-Nicene arguments of common and inseparable operations. As I will show, these trinitarian principles are what allow Augustine to redefine the roles of Christ and the Spirit in baptism in a way that does not separate them to the degree that Burns suggests. The second strand of scholarship is represented by Carlos Garcia Mac Gaw, *Le Problème du Baptême dans le Schisme Donatiste* (Paris: De Boccard, 2008). Mac Gaw's study attempts to collapse the "religion vs. politics" dichotomy that has defined some previous scholarship on Augustine and the Donatists. Mac Gaw instead presents the Donatist/Catholic dispute over baptism as primarily a struggle for power within shared ecclesiastical structures. Thus, he rejects any analysis of Donatism that would make it primarily about economic class divisions or African nationalism. Mac Gaw makes any political aspect of the conflict a symptom of the internal religious disputes. Unfortunately, although Mac Gaw has some insightful readings of Donatist and Catholic ecclesiology, these are primarily subordinated to the internecine dynamics of church politics

the nature of the church, the effect of sin, the consequences of *traditio*, and the relationship between the church and imperial authority. But the field of battle for this broader war was most often the sacrament of baptism.

This focus on baptism indicates the sacrament's significance in the North African tradition in which one's theology of baptism and one's theology of the church mutually inform each other. As the ritual that establishes and preserves the boundaries and identity of the church, the act of washing, sealing, and laying on of hands carries the weight of the church's integrity.[2] Competing notions of who baptizes and what happens in baptism express competing notions of what the church itself is.

The previous two chapters discussed what Augustine understands the church to be, namely, the body of Christ united through the love of the Holy Spirit. Now I turn to the question of baptism as it relates to this ecclesiology and the relationship between the Son and the Spirit.

Augustine, I argue, redefines baptism through a pro-Nicene understanding of the common and inseparable operations of the triune persons.[3] This has implications for both the validity and efficacy of the sacrament,[4] as well as for the church that baptism establishes. Regarding baptism's validity, Augustine's assertion that Christ, not the bishop, baptizes with the Holy Spirit builds upon Latin pro-Nicene arguments about

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and the struggle for power. Moreover, Mac Gaw, though redeeming theological discourse as a proper subject for the historian, eschews any in-depth discussion of trinitarian or Christological thought. My analysis of Augustine's use of pro-Nicene language to construct an anti-Donatist theology of baptism provides a better sense of how Augustine understands the nature and work of baptism at the heart of Mac Gaw's power struggle. The struggle for power or conformity or unity (or however one wants to construe it) is at its heart a dispute about how the triune God saves.

2. For the purposes of my argument, by "baptism" I mean the entire act of washing, sealing, and laying on of hands. For a detailed look at the North African baptismal rite at the time of Augustine, see J. Patout Burns and Robin M. Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa: The Development of Its Practices and Beliefs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 201–219. See also Everett Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church: History, Theology, and Liturgy in the First Five Centuries* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), esp. 351–354, 778–790, 855–856.

3. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, arguments from "common" and "inseparable" operations are easily confused and intermixed in pro-Nicene texts. For the sake of clarity, "common operations" means an argument that demonstrates the divinity of Son or Spirit by pointing out that he does a work that is constitutive of divinity or which he shares with the Father. "Inseparable operations" refers to an argument, often connected with the previous argument, that demonstrates how all three persons act in any given divine action, even if it seems that only one or two do it. For Augustine's understanding and use of inseparable operations, see Lewis Ayres, "'Remember That You Are Catholic' (*serm.* 52.2): Augustine on the Unity of the Triune God," *JECS* 8, no. 1 (2000): 39–82.

4. For this distinction, see, e.g., *bapt.* 4.17.24, 6.1.1.

the unity of nature and power in the Trinity. Regarding the efficacy of baptism, Augustine describes how baptism—because it is an operation of the triune God whereby the Son gives the Spirit to his own body—brings about the unity of the church as a reflection of and a sharing in the life of the Trinity.

My argument in this chapter focuses on Augustine's two sermons on John 1:33, *Io. ev. tr.* 5 and 6.[5] I begin, however, by unpacking the significance of Augustine's use of John 1:33 in general. I contrast Augustine's use of John 1:33 to the use of John 20:22–23 by Cyprian and the Donatists to demonstrate how their respective theologies of baptism promote distinct theologies of the church. Whereas Christ's breathing of the Spirit upon the apostles in John 20:22–23 establishes for Cyprian and the Donatists a vision of the church as a concrete historical reality that must preserve the presence of the Spirit that was given in a discrete past event, the identification of Christ as the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit in John 1:33 allows Augustine to depict the church as a communion that transcends historical particularity because Christ's gift of the Holy Spirit is not a past event but the continually repeated operation of the triune God.

Having suggested at the end of this first section that Augustine is adapting Ambrose's reading of John 1:33, I turn next to *Io. ev. tr.* 5 to verify this connection. Here I highlight Augustine's use of the term *potestas* to describe what Christ retains as the primary agent of all baptisms. The idea of baptismal *potestas* is central to the more traditional sacramental theology of Cyprian and the Donatists, for whom it represents the authority and ability of bishops within the true church to impart the Holy Spirit. Augustine, however, redefines the meaning of baptismal *potestas* by connecting it to pro-Nicene understandings of the unity of nature and power in the Trinity and related arguments from common and inseparable operations. Thus the validity of all baptisms performed in the name of the triune God is grounded in the unity of nature and power that obtains in the three divine persons of the Trinity, rather than in the moral state of bishops or even the physical boundaries of the church.

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5. For a recent treatment of these two sermons in relation to Augustine's overall ecclesiology, see Mariette Cavénet, "L'amour de l'Église selon saint Augustin," *La Vie spirituelle* 166 (2012): 137–158. Cavénet highlights the way baptism, in which Christ gives us his Spirit, establishes the love and unity of the church. She does not, however, investigate the pro-Nicene background for these claims.

Whereas this redefinition of baptismal *potestas* decouples the validity of baptism from the condition of the earthly church, when Augustine returns to John 1:33 in *Io. ev. tr.* 6, he reconnects baptism to the life of the church by making unity a consequence of effective baptism, rather than simply the prerequisite for it. In this sermon Augustine highlights the Spirit's manifestation as a dove at Christ's baptism as the key to understanding how the church, following Song of Songs 6:8, can also be called a dove. Through baptism, the Spirit gives to the church the characteristics of the dove, namely, moaning and simplicity. By connecting these characteristics to Latin pro-Nicene reflections on divine simplicity, I argue that the simplicity of the church for which baptism teaches us to moan is in fact a consequence of and in some way a sharing in the simplicity of the triune God. Thus, Augustine can condemn the Donatists' failure to return to unity as a failure to bear the fruit of effective baptism. Baptism instills a desire for unity because the sacrament itself is an expression of the eternal unity of the triune persons who operate inseparably in the sacrament.

The Spirit of Baptism

In our sermon series, Augustine promotes his Catholic theology of baptism against the Donatists through an extended examination of John 1:33 in *Io. ev. tr.* 5 and 6. The fact that Augustine delivers two sermons, only a week apart, on this one verse—and two lengthy sermons at that—ought to grab the reader's attention. John 1:33 is one of Augustine's favorite texts to use against the Donatists, affirming that Christ, not the bishop, truly baptizes.[6] In foregrounding this verse, Augustine challenges the more traditional baptismal theologies of Cyprian and the Donatists, who emphasize John 20:22–23 instead.

North African baptismal theologies from Cyprian to the Donatists to Augustine turn upon the way in which the Holy Spirit is imparted in the washing of baptism or the laying on of hands that completes the sacrament. The issue of the immediate source of the Spirit in the act of baptism divides Cyprian and the Donatists, on the one hand, from Augustine on the other. For Cyprian and the Donatists, the baptizing bishop directly communicates the Holy Spirit to the baptized Christian.

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6. See *c. litt. Pet.* 1.9.10, 2.2.5, 2.32.75–76, 2.58.132, 2.109.247, 3.49.59; *bapt.* 5.12.14, 5.13.15, 5.20.28; *Cresc.* 2.25.30; *c. ep. Parm.* 2.11.23. See also, Burns, "Christ and the Holy Spirit," 163–164.

This claim operates with an "x from x" logic: the bishop can only impart what he himself has.[7] For Augustine, however, Christ, not the bishop, imparts the Spirit in every true baptism. The bishop serves as merely a minister of Christ's primary agency.[8] Thus, whereas Cyprian and especially the Donatists are concerned about the holiness of the bishop and of the ecclesial communion in order to ensure the presence of the Holy Spirit, Augustine can proclaim that sinfulness in the church or even in the bishop does not negate the presence of the Holy Spirit, since it is Christ who always gives the Spirit.

To get a better appreciation of the difference between these two understandings of the giving of the Spirit in baptism, I want to highlight two scripture citations: John 20:22–23 and John 1:33. The former, in which Christ breathes upon the disciples, giving them the Spirit and promising that what they forgive on earth will be forgiven in heaven, is indicative of the theology of Cyprian and the Donatists. The latter, however, in which John the Baptist learns from the descending dove that Christ is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit, is indicative of Augustine's theology and is the subject of *Io. ev. tr.* 5 and 6. For Cyprian and the Donatists, the gift of the Holy Spirit by Christ is a past event in which the Spirit is entrusted to the guardianship of the church, which now administers it. For Augustine, however, the gift of the Spirit is an eternal operation of Christ the Son, who gives the Spirit in every baptism. These different understandings of the gift of the Spirit in baptism represent competing notions of the historical nature of the church and its relationship to God's eternal work.

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7. As Maureen Tilley has noted, for Donatists like Parmenian, "not the holiness of the priest but the holiness of the Church with which one was affiliated made the difference. ... Baptism belonged to the Church not because the minister of the sacrament or the individuals within the Church were holy, but because God endowed the Church with the gifts or *dotes* requisite for the administration of the sacraments." Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa: The Donatist World* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 102. To some extent, then, the emphasis on priestly purity is an Augustinian caricature of Donatism. Yet even granting this, the Spirit is still dispensed by the church, to whom God primarily gives it through Christ's breathing upon the apostles. Donatist baptismal theology is more nuanced and diverse than what Augustine wants to admit, but I believe the "historical" aspect that I describe still generally represents the larger framework within which Cyprian and the Donatists operate. See also Burns and Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa*, 195–198, 606–609.

8. For brief but thorough summaries of this aspect of Augustine's baptismal theology, see Burns and Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa*, 215; and Ferguson, *Baptism in the Early Church*, 797.

To draw out these differences, I turn first to Cyprian's use of John 20:22–23 in the so-called "rebaptism" controversy of the third century. In one of his first letters following the outbreak of Novatian's schism, Cyprian engages the question of whether Novatian offers true baptism. Before deciding this question, Cyprian establishes the necessary conditions for true baptism:

> Now in baptism we are each forgiven our sins; and the Lord asserts clearly in his Gospel that sins can be forgiven only through those who possess the Holy Spirit. For when he was sending forth his disciples after the resurrection, he spoke to them in these words: "'Just as the Father sent me, so too I am sending you.' And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you have forgiven, they shall be forgiven him; whose sins you have retained, they shall be retained.'" In this passage he is showing that he alone has the power to baptize and grant forgiveness of sins who possesses the Holy Spirit. ... We challenge, then, those who espouse the cause of these heretics and schismatics [Novatianists] to answer us this: do they or do they not possess the Holy Spirit?[9]

To answer the question of whether Novatian has the Spirit, Cyprian appeals to the practice of laying hands upon those who come to the church from other communions "so that they might receive what neither exists with them nor can be imparted by them."[10] Thus Cyprian's argument assumes that the Holy Spirit cannot possibly be possessed by those outside the church.

Similarly, in his letter to Iubaianus, Cyprian cites John 20:22–23 to show that

> only those leaders who are set in authority within the church and have been established in accordance with the law of the gospel and the institution of the Lord have the lawful power to baptize and to grant forgiveness of sins; outside the church there can be neither binding nor loosing, for there is nobody who has the power either to bind or to loose.[11]

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9. Cyprian, *ep.* 69.11.1–2. See Mac Gaw, *Le Problème du Baptême*, 142–143.

10. Cyprian, *ep.* 69.11.3.

11. Cyprian, *ep.* 73.7.2.

Cyprian's use of John 20:22–23 in these letters of the Novatianist controversy reveal a baptismal pneumatology defined by the boundaries of the institutional church. The historical foundation of the church's power is Christ's breathing upon the apostles and granting them the authority to forgive sins. The true church that has the power to baptize with the Holy Spirit and therefore to forgive sins is a concrete community extended through time that possesses that same Spirit given to the apostles. The historical particularity of the giving of the Spirit in Christ's breathing undergirds the authority of those bishops, who are the heirs of the apostles, because they have received that same Spirit through historical succession. By highlighting John 20:22–23 as the definitive text for understanding the giving of the Spirit in baptism, Cyprian makes the institutional church the guardian and dispenser of the Holy Spirit in such a way that the Spirit is inaccessible outside the one communion that can claim historical continuity with those breathed-on apostles.

In their appropriation of Cyprian, the Donatists make similar use of John 20:22–23. Augustine reports that Donatists use the passage to enforce an either/or logic of church identity that rejects Augustine's affirmation of true baptism existing in both the Donatist and Catholic communions: "'And if it [John 20:23] is so,' they [the Donatists] say, 'then our communion is the church of Christ; for the Holy Spirit does not work the remission of sins except for in the church. And if our communion is the church of Christ, then your communion is not the church of Christ.'"[12] This continues the earlier North African theology of Cyprian in which the singular nature of the historic church is defined by the possession of the Spirit and the subsequent ability to forgive sins. Augustine's affirmation that a false church might have the true baptism appears completely nonsensical to the Donatists, just as it would have been to Cyprian.

Donatist sources do not simply regurgitate Cyprian, however, and there is evidence of a more complex use of John 20:22–23 in the Donatist bishop Petilian's second letter to Augustine. Here Petilian suggests three different grades of baptism: the one of John the Baptist "unto repentance," which did not impart the Spirit; the second of Christ, who gave the Holy Spirit by breathing upon the apostles at John 20:22–23; the third of the Spirit himself in the flames of Pentecost. Petilian describes these as ascending grades of baptism, each building upon the previous type. He

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12. *bapt.* 1.11.15.

can therefore deny the Spirit to the Catholics by merely denying them the first degree: "But you, persecutor, do not even have the water of repentance. You therefore, *traditor,* do not have the Holy Spirit of Christ; for Christ did not betray others to death, but was himself betrayed."[13] Here Petilian emphasizes not so much the necessary singularity of the ecclesial communion but the impossibility that the true church could be identified with the *traditores.* The sinfulness of their communion, defined by the ultimate sin of *traditio,* precludes the possibility that they have the Spirit who forgives sins.

For both Cyprian and the Donatists, even in the more complex theology of Petilian, John 20:22–23 establishes the identification of the true church with the Holy Spirit: the true church has the Holy Spirit, and anyone outside that church necessarily lacks the Spirit and therefore cannot impart it in baptism. This emphasis on John 20:22–23 not only connects the presence of the Spirit to the act of forgiving sins in baptism, but also makes the possession of that Spirit a concrete historical matter. It is the institutional church of successive bishops who have the Holy Spirit because they are connected to that particular historical event in which Christ gave the Holy Spirit to the apostles. The giving of the Spirit to the church is a historical event; the act of baptizing is then an act of the church that has been given the Spirit. This historical concreteness makes the physical boundaries and purity of that one communion the paramount concern for guarding and dispensing that sanctifying Spirit. Augustine, in turning his emphasis away from John 20:22–23 and toward John 1:33, will redefine the nature of the giving of the Spirit as an eternally divine act that is not contingent upon the concrete historical church.

Before turning to Augustine's use of John 1:33, though, I want to note what Augustine has to say about John 20:22–23 when he engages the Cyprian-Donatist tradition of interpretation directly. In his response to Petilian's tri-grade theory of baptism, Augustine emphasizes the unity of the Spirit who is breathed out by Christ with the Spirit who descends at Pentecost. "The same Christ," Augustine affirms, gives the Spirit in both cases.[14] This destabilizes the historical particularity of Christ's breathing of the Spirit. The fact that Christ is the giving agent in both cases calls into

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13. *c. litt. Pet.* 2.32.72.

14. *c. litt. Pet.* 2.32.73.

question the uniqueness of the breathing, as well as the church's exclusive possession of the Spirit.[15]

Similarly, in *On Baptism* (*bapt.*), Augustine offers his own exegesis of John 20:22–23 in which the apostles represent the church [*personam gerebant ecclesiae*].[16] This reading of the passage leads to an explanation of the nature of the church that truly exists only in the good members.[17] Thus, the concrete historical church does not as a whole possess the Spirit; only the mysterious communion of saints does, both in sojourn and in glory. Again, Augustine refuses to align the historical reality of the church with the possession of the Holy Spirit who is given in baptism. He thus rejects the Cyprian-Donatist interpretation of John 20:22–23 as the historical foundation of the church's identity and power.

John 1:33, not John 20:22–23, defines the giving of the Spirit in baptism for Augustine. Whenever he cites the verse against the Donatists, he emphasizes that Christ is the one who baptizes. Often, as in our sermon series, he specifies that Christ is the one who baptizes *with the Holy Spirit*. This is what John learns from the descent of the dove, and, Augustine says, it is what the Donatists need to learn about the nature of baptism. The gift of the Holy Spirit is not an act of the institutional or historical church. It is an act of God. Because of this, the relative purity of the bishop or of the entire communion does not matter. They are not the ones responsible for giving the Spirit, so it does not matter if they lack the Spirit. This allows Augustine to undercut many of the Donatists' complaints against the church of the *traditores*. No matter the sins of bishops or laity, past or present, Christ still gives the Spirit in every true baptism. Furthermore, the criteria for true baptism need not include the church's physical boundaries because the church is not the receptacle of the Spirit, guarding and dispensing him. The gift of the Spirit can transcend ecclesial boundaries because each time he is given, he is given by Christ. Christ does not transfer his role in giving the Spirit to humans, not even in the breathing of

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15. There is possibly a pro-Nicene principle at work here. For Ambrose and Augustine, the repeated sending of the Holy Spirit is characteristic of his *proprium* and is what prohibits a true incarnation of the Spirit, comparable to that of the Son in Christ. To declare a "once and for all" historical sending of the Spirit would be to negate the defining characteristic of the Spirit's missional activity. See Michel Barnes, "Augustine's Last Pneumatology," *AugStud* 39, no. 2 (2008): 226.

16. For more on this prosopological method of exegesis, see Chapter 2, pp. 58–73.

17. For more on this theme, see Chapter 1, p. 41.

the Spirit upon the apostles in John 20:22–23. Even beyond *Io. ev. tr.* 5 and 6, which are particularly concerned with interpreting John 1:33, this verse reappears elsewhere in our sermon series as a definitive statement of the Donatists' error in making baptism a primarily human work.[18]

There are no clear North African precedents for Augustine's use of John 1:33 against the Donatists. There is, however, an intriguing pro-Nicene use of the verse in Ambrose's work *On the Spirit* (*spir.*). As I discussed in the previous chapter,[19] Ambrose's *spir.* relies upon arguments of common and inseparable operations. In this same vein, Ambrose reads John 1:33 (along with Luke 3:22) as a revelation that "he [the Spirit] has a share with the Father and the Son of the one honor in the authority (*imperio*), of the one operation in the mystery, of the one gift in the bath."[20] For Ambrose, the manifestation of the Spirit as a dove at Christ's baptism reveals that the Spirit performs the work of baptism along with the Father and the Son. This common operation points to the full divinity of the Spirit who operates in a divine act. Ambrose's proof of the Spirit's divinity grows out of his theology of baptism as a primarily divine act. Such a supposition provides the necessary premise for the argument of common operations that he deploys here.

Beyond the specific Johannine account, Christ's baptism in general serves as a key passage for Latin pro-Nicenes seeking to parse the distinction and unity of Father and Son, usually using a grammatical analysis of the Father's identification of the Son in conjunction with John 10:30 or 14:9.[21] The most significant pro-Nicene use of Christ's baptism, for the purposes of my argument, is Augustine's own *Sermon* 52 (ca. 410) on the Matthean account of the baptism. In this sermon Augustine argues that the three divine persons present at Christ's baptism are irreducible yet inseparable in their actions. Taking the principle of inseparable operations to be an assumed part of orthodox trinitarian thought, he shows how the voice of the Father, the descending dove of the Spirit, and the baptized Son all operate inseparably in Christ's baptism.[22] Augustine has known this

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18. *Io. ev. tr.* 4.12, 4.15–16, 7.3.

19. See Chapter 3, p. 123.

20. Ambrose, *spir.* 3.1.4.

21. See Hilary, *trin.* 2.8, 2.23, 6.23, 6.27, 9.20, 12.14–15; Ambrose, *in Luc.* 2.92–95; Rufinus, *symb.* 4; Augustine, *trin.* 1.4.7, 2.5.10, 2.10.18, *et alia*.

22. See Ayres, "Remember That You Are Catholic," 55–64.

principle of inseparable operations—which expands on arguments from common operations such as those I quoted above from Ambrose—at least since 389.[23] He makes a similar argument about the inseparability of the Trinity at Christ's baptism in a sermon from 397,[24] and he deploys an explicit inseparable operations argument with reference to Christ's baptism in the first book of *On the Trinity*, composed by 405, a year before our sermon series.[25] In 407, then, when he preaches *Io. ev. tr.* 5 and 6, Augustine already knows Christ's baptism as a trinitarian theophany that manifests the principle of inseparable operations. Such a reading of John 1:33 allows Augustine to reorient the nature of the church founded on baptism away from the concrete historical work of the bishops and toward the eternal work of the Son who operates inseparably from the Spirit whom he gives in every baptism.

This pro-Nicene reading of John 1:33—and of Christ's baptism in general—lies behind Augustine's ubiquitous use of the verse against the Donatists. Augustine's emphasis on Christ's primary agency in the giving of the Holy Spirit in baptism develops out of this Latin pro-Nicene theology of common and inseparable operations. I turn first to the North African notion of baptismal *potestas* and the way Augustine appropriates the term with a pro-Nicene emphasis to interpret John 1:33 and the nature of Christ's baptism in *Io. ev. tr.* 5.

The Power of Christ

Augustine preached two sermons on John 1:33, *Io. ev. tr.* 5 and 6, and together they offer a thorough articulation of his pro-Catholic, anti-Donatist theology of baptism. Although both sermons take up the same text and treat

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23. See *ep.* 11.2. Ayres, "Remember That You Are Catholic," 46.

24. *s.* 308A.4–5.

25. *trin.* 1.4.7. This is, as Ayres comments, "the first time Augustine names the doctrine of inseparable operations by speaking precisely of the divine three as *inseparabiliter operunt*" (*Augustine and the Trinity*, 96 n.1). The dating of this bit of *trin.* 1 is particularly fraught. A.-M. La Bonnardière argues that *trin.* 1.1.1–6.13 is all a late interpolation, mainly due to the scripture citations found in 1.6.13 that suggest a later stage of Augustine's trinitarian argumentation. See La Bonnardière, *Recherches de chronologie augustinienne* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1965), 83–87. But, given Augustine's use of a similar argument in *s.* 308A.4–5 already in 397, I agree with Ayres's suggestion that only 1.6.13, and not all that precedes it, is the late interpolation, leaving 1.4.7 as indicative of "the earliest layer of the work" (Ayres, *Augustine and the Trinity*, 119 n.83).

the same central issue of baptism, they each focus on a particular aspect of the verse and of the sacrament. The difference between the two sermons reflects Augustine's distinction between valid and effective baptism. This distinction would appear nonsensical to Cyprian, and certainly did appear so to the Donatists. For their more traditional North African theology, a valid baptism is by definition effective and vice versa. Either the Holy Spirit is imparted and sins are forgiven, or the Holy Spirit is not imparted and sins, therefore, are not forgiven.

But Augustine divides the issue of baptism into two parts. First is the question of a baptism's validity: if a baptism is performed in the name of the Trinity, then it is a true baptism, no matter where or by whom it is administered. Neither the purity nor the orthodoxy of the minister matters. Nor does it matter if the baptism takes place within the bounds of the one true church. Augustine can thus acknowledge that Donatists do have valid Christian baptism and do not need to be baptized upon entering Catholic communion. In doing so, Augustine separates the validity of baptism from the integrity of the historical, earthly church.

Second, though, Augustine reorients the relationship between the church and baptism by establishing participation in the one church as an indicator of the efficacy of baptism. Though one might have true baptism, if one is not in communion with the true church, then that baptism is ineffective, not working for the salvation of the individual. Augustine's typical illustration of this point is the military character, the soldier's tattoo. Though the ink remains a true mark upon one who has gone AWOL, it only marks that person as a traitor. The mark only serves its true purpose when the soldier is within his proper ranks.[26] This distinction between valid and effective baptism also represents the distinction between *Io. ev. tr.* 5 and *Io. ev. tr.* 6, respectively.

I turn first to *Io. ev. tr.* 5 and the issue of valid baptism. In using the term *potestas* in this sermon to describe what Christ retains as the primary agent of all baptisms, Augustine appropriates pro-Nicene power theologies as expressed in arguments from common and inseparable operations. This subverts the traditional North African understanding of baptismal

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26. For the origins of this image, see Bradley Mark Peper, "On the Mark: Augustine's Baptismal Analogy of the *Nota Militaris*," *AugStud* 38, no. 2 (2007): 353–363. Peper clarifies the ambiguity of the term *nota*, demonstrating that it refers to a tattoo rather than a branding. Most intriguing is Peper's suggestion that Augustine's use of this image has a particular historical reference in the failed insurrection under Gildo and the possible fate of the rebellious soldiers.

potestas, which for Cyprian and the Donatists rests upon the authority of the baptizing bishop that is derived either from his presence within the one ecclesial communion or from his retention of the Holy Spirit through his own moral purity. Augustine's pro-Nicene understanding of power thus makes baptism an expression of the nature of the triune God rather than the character of the human minister or his institution.

In Ioannis evangelium tractatus 5: Christ's *Potestas*

In *Io. ev. tr.* 5, Augustine teaches that Christ is the one who gives the Holy Spirit in baptism, as is his typical interpretation of John 1:33 against the Donatists. The way Augustine focuses on the particular term *potestas*, however, makes this sermon unique. The baptism of Christ is so named because Christ retains the *potestas* of that baptism, never transferring it to anyone else. This is the *leitmotif* repeated *ad nauseum* in *Io. ev. tr.* 5. One passage suffices to illustrate the main points of Augustine's use of *potestas* in this tractate:

> For baptism is like the one in whose power it is given (*in cuius potes-tatem datur*), not like the one through whose ministry it is given (*per cuius ministerium datur*). John's baptism was like John: a just baptism of a just man, yet only a man. But a man who had received this grace from the Lord, and such a grace, so that he was worthy to go before the judge, point him out with his finger, and fulfill that prophecy, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Prepare a way for the Lord.'" However, the Lord's baptism is such as the Lord is; therefore the Lord's baptism is divine, because the Lord is God.[27]

This passage preserves the "x from x" logic of earlier baptismal theology. This logic is what lies behind Donatist rejection of *traditor* baptism. Such sinners cannot impart sinlessness. Here, though, Augustine highlights the way in which the baptism of Christ is a communication not of human justice—as was John's—but of something divine. Below I will clarify what is meant by this divine character of the Lord's baptism, but for now I want to note how this appropriation of *potestas* language allows Augustine to intensify his reorientation of baptism away from the concrete historical purity of the church and toward the eternal work of God.

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27. *Io. ev. tr.* 5.6.

This occurs in Augustine's privileging of John 1:33 over John 20:22–23, and here Augustine connects that same reorientation to the question of baptismal *potestas*.

This emphasis on *potestas* represents a fairly recent development in Augustine's anti-Donatist baptismal theology, and *Io. ev. tr.* 5 contains his most extended, detailed engagement with the concept. Prior to this sermon, two uses of the term against the Donatists suggest Augustine's developing theology of baptismal *potestas*. The first instance, a brief comment in *bapt.*, also concerns John 1:33. John learns through the descending dove that Christ will retain the *potestas* of baptism. And this is the difference between the baptism of John and the baptism of Christ. John's is truly his own baptism because it derives from his own *potestas* (though even that, Augustine affirms, is a gift from God).[28] Augustine repeats this theme at length in *Io. ev. tr.* 5, but in *bapt.* he only notes it in passing.

A more substantial treatment of the issue appears in Augustine's treatise *On the Harmony of the Gospels* (*cons. Ev.*), possibly written only a year or two before *Io. ev. tr.* 5 and 6.[29] Here, Augustine emphasizes that what John learns from the descent of the Spirit is that Christ "baptized with the Holy Spirit according to a certain divine *potestas* proper to himself."[30] There are two things of note in this statement. First, Augustine explicitly identifies that power as "divine." Second, this divine power is a *proprium* of Christ. The *proprium* of Christ's power is here not a *proprium* that distinguishes him from the other two divine persons in such a way that charity is the *proprium* of the Holy Spirit. Rather, it is a *proprium* that separates Christ from other human persons. Thus, *cons. Ev.* picks up the beginnings of Augustine's understanding of baptismal *potestas* from *bapt.* and adds the claim that baptismal *potestas* is related to the divinity of Christ. This connection between *potestas*, John 1:33, and Christ's baptismal agency only fully flourishes in *Io. ev. tr.* 5.

Baptismal *Potestas* in North African Theology

Augustine's preaching on Christ's baptismal *potestas* in *Io. ev. tr.* 5 continues his project of separating the legitimacy of baptism from the historical

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28. *bapt.* 5.13.15.

29. For the dating of *cons. Ev.*, see Pierre-Marie Hombert, *Nouvelles Recherches de Chronologie Augustinienne* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 2000), 80–87; and H. Markel, "Concensu euangelistarum (De-)," *Aug-Lex*, 1:1228–1236.

30. *cons. Ev.* 2.15.32.

particularity of the church and its ministers by rooting baptism firmly in the agency and power of Christ. This emphasis on the term *potestas*, though, is not an arbitrary choice. By focusing on this particular term, Augustine takes aim at the technical language of prior North African baptismal theology. For the sacramental theology of Cyprian and the Donatists, *potestas* undergirds the legitimacy of baptism.[31]

This concern for baptismal *potestas* arises as a key point in Cyprian's letters against the Novatianists. Bishops perform baptism through a certain *potestas* that brings about the forgiveness of sins. For instance, in his letter to Magnus, Cyprian elaborates,

> Since the church alone has the vital water and the *potestatem* to baptize and wash men, whoever says that anyone is able to be baptized and sanctified by Novatian, let him first show and demonstrate that Novatian is in the church or presides over the church. For the church is one; and since the church is one, it is not possible to be both inside and outside of it.[32]

Cyprian defines the *potestas* that makes for a true baptism by the unity and insularity of the church. Cyprian has no Augustinian distinction between valid and effective baptism. One who is outside that singular communion cannot, therefore, baptize or be baptized at all. By separating from the one church, schismatic bishops forsake the *potestas* that effects the cleansing of sin in the sacrament. This is why those who leave the Novatianist communion and enter Cyprian's communion must be baptized. It is not a rebaptism since the faux-sacrament of schismatics lacks the defining and operative *potestas*. At the Council of Carthage in 256, other North African bishops support this position. Fortunatus of Thuccabori, Priviatianus of Sufetula, Pomponius of Dionysiana, and Clarus of Mascula all make similar claims,[33] identifying the schismatics as heretics who can have no access to the *potestas* of baptism.

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31. See Burns and Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa*, 226–228.

32. Cyprian, *ep.* 69.3.1. See also *epp.* 69.7.1, 69.15.2, 73.1, 73.5.2. This last passage suggests the possible biblical root of the connection between *potestas* and baptism in Christ's declaration that all *potestas* has been given to him followed by the great commission (Matt 28:18–19).

33. As cited, respectively, in Augustine, *bapt.* 6.24.42, 6.26.49, 7.12.22, 7.43.84. On the Council of Carthage in 256, see Mac Gaw, *Le Problème du Baptême*, 163–170.

Cyprian's theology of sacramental *potestas* reappears in Donatist objections to Catholic—or in their eyes, *traditor*—baptism. The sinfulness of the *traditores* is incompatible with the *potestas* of baptism that is the presence of the Holy Spirit. Thus any communion built upon such powerless bishops cannot claim to possess the sacramental *potestas*. Petilian offers an example of such an argument in his second letter to Augustine:

> For all *potestas* is from God ... just as the Lord Jesus Christ responded to Pontius Pilate, "You would hold no *potestatem* over me unless it were given to you from above" (John 19:11). And again, as John said, "A man is not able to do anything unless it is given to him from heaven" (John 3:27). Show, therefore, *traditor*, when you received *potestatem* to simulate the mysteries.[34]

Petilian clarifies that bishops derive the *potestas* of baptism from God. But he cannot conceive that such *potestas* could be given to those who are, as he calls Augustine, *traditores*, those who handed over scriptures to be burned or those who hold communion with such persons. As with Cyprian's view of Novatian, Petilian sees Augustine and the church of the *traditores* as necessarily lacking the divine *potestas* and therefore unable to perform true baptisms. Though Cyprian underscores the way in which *potestas* operates within the unity of the church, Petilian emphasizes that sinfulness, particularly the sin of the *traditor*, utterly negates one's access to such power. The logic of Petilian and the logic of Cyprian are intimately related, though, since Petilian uses the condition of severe sin and the consequent loss of divine *potestas* and the Holy Spirit as the criterion for establishing which communion is the singular, insular church of Cyprian that safeguards and benefits from sacramental *potestas*.

Augustine's preaching on Christ's baptismal *potestas* in *Io. ev. tr.* 5 ought to be read in light of this tradition. By belaboring the point that Christ, not the human minister, retains the *potestas*, Augustine undermines any understanding of baptismal *potestas* that would locate it only within the boundaries of the church. In Cyprian, the Council of 256, and the Donatists, *potestas* does not seem to have any technical meaning beyond a general "political" sense, as in "authority" or "ability." By reorienting that power to Christ, though, Augustine's use suggests the more

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34. Cited in Augustine, *c. litt. Pet.* 2.31.70.

technical understanding of power deployed in post-Nicene disputes about God's power. I turn now to this alternative power tradition that lies behind Augustine's understanding of Christ's baptismal *potestas*.

Power in Nicene and Pro-Nicene Theology

Whereas the North African tradition of baptismal *potestas* provides the immediate context for Augustine's redefinition of the term, the source of his understanding of the term and its implications for his anti-Donatist theology of baptism lies in the tradition of trinitarian discourse mediated to him primarily by Ambrose. Michel Barnes's *The Power of God* provides the most substantial analysis of the technical use of the terms δύναμις, *virtus*, and *potestas* from Plato to Gregory of Nyssa.[35] By the technical sense of power, Barnes means "the degree and kind of unity that obtains in an existent between what an existent is and the existent as it is capable of affecting and being affected, that is, insofar as it is real or exists."[36] This technical understanding of the intrinsic relationship between nature and power, Barnes argues, is a key component of pro-Nicene theology as it develops out of fourth-century polemics. Before turning to the more specific antecedents of Augustine's understanding of *potestas* in Ambrose, I want to rehearse some of the basic moves that Barnes identifies in fourth-century conceptions of divine power. This is necessary because Augustine adapts a particular type of power theology that is related to the technical version that Barnes identifies but is not identical with it.

Barnes narrates the development of "power" theology in the fourth century by focusing on the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 1:24, where Paul describes Christ as the "power and wisdom of God." Early non-Nicenes, such as Arius, Asterius, and the Eusebii of both Nicomedia and Caesarea, deploy a range of interpretations to argue for the subordination of the Son to the Father. Three ways of understanding the phrase "God's power" are significant in these authors. The first approach distinguishes the Father's own (ἴδιος) power from other powers, such as the Son, maintaining an ontological difference between the power that the Father has and any

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35. Michel René Barnes, *The Power of God: Δύναμις in Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Theology* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001).

36. Barnes, *The Power of God*, 126–127.

other type of power.[37] The other two understandings of power that appear in these early non-Nicenes deal with how the Son is understood as this lesser power that is still "the power of God." One option is to depict the Son as chief among the multiple powers that act as God's ministers.[38] This is a political understanding of power that lacks the technical sense of the word. Another option is to describe the Son as the power of God in a derivative sense, using an "x from x" logic that makes the Son an image of the power that only perfectly obtains in the nature of the Father.[39] This connects the Son's power to the more technical understanding of the Father's power, but still makes the Son's power something different, derivative, and therefore subordinate.

Something new happens in the radical monotheism of Marcellus of Ancyra. Marcellus rejects any talk of the Son as a second power because a second power would create a second nature and therefore a second God.[40] This represents a strict interpretation of the technical sense of δύναμις in which power is intrinsic to nature. Despite his denial of any personal distinction in the eternal godhead, Marcellus's one-power theology is a precedent for the pro-Nicene theology that will appear in the second half of the fourth century with such figures as Gregory of Nyssa and, most important for my purposes, Ambrose.

Barnes delineates two stages in the development of a pro-Nicene power theology. The first stage, which he categorizes as "neo-Nicene," identifies one power of God, but says that this is the Son who is the Father's power but without any "x from x" language of derivation. This shows up in Athanasius's theology of the 350s and in some of Ambrose's early work.[41] This neo-Nicene power theology "is not based on what power and wisdom are conceptually but on the claim that the power and wisdom in question is God's own."[42] In contrast to this, in the second stage, pro-Nicene theologians embrace the full technical understanding of power as an intrinsic

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37. See Athanasius's discussion of the theology of Asterius at *Ar.* 1.2.5. Barnes, *The Power of God*, 126–127.

38. Ibid.

39. This logic is present in Eusebius of Caesarea, *praep. ev.* 7.12.2; *dem. ev.* 4.5. Barnes, *The Power of God*, 129–135.

40. Barnes, *The Power of God*, 135–138.

41. Athanasius, *gent.* 46.52–59; Ambrose, *virg.* 3.1.2–4; Barnes, *The Power of God*, 146, 166–167.

42. Barnes, *The Power of God*, 147.

manifestation of a given nature. This in turn creates a "one power, one nature" logic that Barnes claims characterizes pro-Nicene as opposed to neo-Nicene power theologies.[43] There is only one power in the Trinity, but this is a result of the way in which power is intrinsically linked to nature. Naming Christ as "the power of God" demonstrates that the Son shares in the full divine nature and power of God.

For Barnes, Gregory of Nyssa evinces the paradigmatic pro-Nicene power theology, but for my purposes the pre-eminence of this "one power, one nature" logic in Latin pro-Nicenes is most paramount. Phoebadius, Hilary, and Ambrose all deploy this technical sense of power as a correlative of nature.[44] This suggests a rich background for Augustine's own use of power language.

It is difficult to say how much of this tradition Augustine picked up, however, since, as Barnes demonstrates, Augustine does not seem to know the full technical logic of the pro-Nicene power theology as a way to read 1 Corinthians 1:24.[45] Yet, Augustine does know that there is only one power in God and that this power is common to and inseparable from all three persons. If Augustine lacks the logic, he certainly grasps the grammar.

This imprecision in Augustine can be explained by following an exegetical tradition related to but different from Barnes's emphasis on 1 Corinthians 1:24. The interpretation of John 10:30 within Latin pro-Nicenes often lacks the precise nature/power logic, even though it describes the oneness of Father and Son in terms of their common power. This most

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43. As I mentioned in the introduction, my overall argument in this book uses broader categories whereby most of what Barnes considers to be "neo-Nicene" would be considered early "pro-Nicene." For this particular bit, however, it is useful to note how Barnes delineates a development in power theology between these two groups.

44. "That power (*virtus*), which is in need of no external aid, is said to be substance" (Phoebadius, *c. Ar.* 8.3). ". . . since power (*virtus*) is the very reality of the nature . . ." (Hilary, *trin.* 9.52.10–14). "What is power (*virtus*), but the perfection of nature?" (Ambrose, *fid.* 1.5.39), English translations from Barnes, *The Power of God*, 152. These paradigmatic citations all use *virtus* to translate δύναμις, but as I will show below, *potestas* is also used, though often without the precise technical logic of the nature/power relationship.

45. Michel Barnes, "*De Trinitate* VI and VII: Augustine and the Limits of Nicene Orthodoxy," *AugStud* 38, no. 1 (2007), 189–202. Although Barnes is right that Augustine, even at the time of writing *trin.* 6 (ca. 414), is not yet comfortable with the full pro-Nicene reading of 1 Cor 1:24, Augustine makes great use of the more general version of pro-Nicene power theology that I describe below. I think especially the type of power argument that Augustine shows at *Io. ev. tr.* 5.1, discussed in the next section, ought to be considered an indication that Augustine is engaging a limited portion of the Latin pro-Nicene power tradition, focusing more on arguments from common and inseparable operations than the title of Christ as the "power of God" from 1 Cor 1:24.

often appears in arguments from common operations that depend upon a single power in the Trinity. Augustine appropriates this more general power language, associated with John 10:30, from the Latin pro-Nicenes.

Marius Victorinus, for instance, cites John 10:30 to demonstrate that "[t]hey [the Father and Son] are from the same substance and power (*ex eadem substantia et potentia*)."[46] To clarify what he means by "from," Victorinus returns to John 10:30 in the next paragraph to specify that the oneness of the Son with the Father is due to the Son's having "from the Father substance and power, wholly begotten from the all."[47] Thus, though Victorinus links power and substance in his reading of John 10:30, he does not reference the technical relationship between the two that will develop in later pro-Nicene authors. Instead, Victorinus reflects what Barnes calls an "anachronistic" understanding of power that is more at home in the multiple-powers theology and "x from x" logic of Asterius and Eusebius, even though Victorinus uses the language to prove the full divinity of the Son.[48]

Hilary, on the other hand, offers a reading of John 10:30 in light of divine power and substance that moves more toward the pro-Nicene emphasis on the unity of the terms and the utility of arguments from common operations. Hilary reads John 10:30 with John 10:37—"If I do not do the works of the Father, do not believe me"—again to connect nature to power. The Son manifests his divinity by performing works consistent with divine power. This connection between nature and power, then, undergirds an argument of common operations. More significant, though, Hilary maintains the Father's generation of the Son as the source of the Son's divine power, but this does not lead to multiple powers: "That which is able to do [the Father's] own works is not external to [the Father]. But it is an accomplishment of his dignity that he is able to give birth to power without alienating the substance. [*nec extra se est quod quae sua sunt potest, et profectus dignitatis est genuisse potestatem nec alienasse naturam.*]"[49] The key for Hilary is that the Father does beget the Son as Power, with an "x from x" logic, but this does not lead to multiple powers because the nature is not separated between Father and Son.

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46. Marius Victorinus, *adv. Ar.* 1A.8.

47. Marius Victorinus, *adv. Ar.* 1A.9.

48. Barnes, *The Power of God*, 156.

49. Hilary, *trin.* 7.26.

Hilary re-emphasizes the unity of this natural power when he returns to John 10:30 at the end of *trin.* 7. Here he wants to squelch any suspicion that the work of the Son is actually the Father's power acting in the Son as an instrument (*per virtutis efficientiam*). Rather, Hilary asserts, the Son does the work of the Father through the power that is rightfully his through his divine birth. But this power of the Son is the one and the same power of the Father, of their one nature: "For by the power of the nature (*naturae virtute*) each is in the other."[50] This language of the "power of nature" supports Hilary's arguments from common operations to prove that the Son and the Father are one God with one nature because of their one power.

Ambrose, too, emphasizes the unity of divine power in his reading of John 10:30 in *On the Christian Faith* (*fid.*) 1.1, remarking that John says that the Father and the Son are *unum* "lest there be any separation of power (*discretio potestatis*)."[51] Ambrose summarizes how a proper reading of John 10:30 refutes the "Arians" by declaring that it reveals the Trinity to be "perfect in both the fullness of divinity and unity of power (*perfecta et plenitudo sit diuinitatis et unitas potestatis*)."[52] This represents an implicit understanding of the relationship between the one nature and the one power of God, but it lacks the logical precision that Ambrose will evince later in the same work.[53]

Of greater significance for my argument is Ambrose's use of John 10:30 to unite nature and power language in his arguments of common operations in *On the Holy Spirit*. In *spir.* 3.16, Ambrose reads John 10:30 as demonstrative of "the unity of divine power (*divinae potestatis . . . unitatem*)."[54] This one divine power is that by which the Father, Son, and Spirit all operate in common, demonstrating the one nature of the three persons. This passage does not explicitly connect the unity of power to a technical understanding of how power relates to a given nature. It does, however, evince a more basic understanding that the unity of Father, Son, and Spirit obtains at the level of power and that the common operations of the three persons reveal that unity.

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50. Hilary, *trin.* 7.41.

51. Ambrose, *fid.* 1.1.9.

52. Ambrose, *fid.* 1.1.10.

53. See esp. *fid.* 4.3.36. Barnes claims that this new precision comes from Ambrose's more direct engagement with Homoians in Milan (*The Power of God*, 165).

54. Ambrose, *spir.* 3.16.114.

In his immediate Latin pro-Nicene predecessors, therefore, Augustine would have known a more general principle of the unity and singularity of divine power.[55] Augustine brings this understanding of divine *potestas* to the traditional North African theology of baptismal *potestas*. To solidify this connection and demonstrate the consequences of it, I now return to *Io. ev. tr.* 5 and Augustine's insistence on Christ's sole possession of baptismal *potestas*.

In Ioannis evangelium tractatus 5: The Inseparable *Potestas* of Christ's Baptism with the Holy Spirit

Augustine's use of *potestas* to describe Christ's primary baptismal agency in *Io. ev. tr.* 5 is an adaptation of this Latin pro-Nicene theology of the unity of divine power that subverts the traditional North African understanding of baptismal *potestas* and its relationship to the insularity of the church and the purity of the bishop. So far I have shown that there are two "power traditions" that Augustine would have known, the North African one and the pro-Nicene one. But, while Augustine's emphasis on Christ's divine *potestas* of baptism suggests the trinitarian use of the term, it is possible that the parallel is merely a coincidence.

Fortunately, a striking passage at the beginning of *Io. ev. tr.* 5 points directly to the pro-Nicene power tradition. The passage is an argument for inseparable operations that, unless it is merely a random anti-Homoian aside, connects the two traditions of *potestas* in Augustine's anti-Donatist theology of baptism. Augustine, discussing the sending of John the Baptist, elaborates,

> If the Truth had sent John, Christ had sent him. And what Christ does with the Father, the Father does; and what the Father does with Christ, Christ does. The Father does not do anything separately without the Son; nor does the Son do anything separately without

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55. Note that in most of these texts exegeting John 10:30 and evincing a more general, non-technical understanding of the one divine power common to all three persons, the word *potestas* is preferred to the word *virtus*. The more technical versions of pro-Nicene power theology tend to use *virtus*. If Augustine is drawing from the Latin pro-Nicene tradition in his redefinition of baptismal *potestas*, then it is more likely to be this general version of the principle, particularly as it is deployed in arguments for common operations that Augustine adapts to inseparable operations. For other Latin pro-Nicene uses, particularly those of Nicetas of Remesiana and Rufinus the Syrian, see Barnes, "*De Trinitate* VI and VII," 189.

the Father; inseparable charity, inseparable unity, inseparable maj-
esty, inseparable *potestas*, according to these words which he him-
self posited, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). Who, therefore,
sent John? If we say, "The Father," we speak the truth; if we say, "the
Son," we speak the truth. However, to be most clear let us say, "The
Father and the Son." Yet one God sent him whom the Father and
Son sent, because the Son said, "I and the Father are one."[56]

This articulation of the inseparable operations of the Father and Son is a
development of the arguments from common operations that I noted in
Hilary and Ambrose. Like both of his predecessors, Augustine interprets
the *unum* of John 10:30 as a unity of, among other essential divine attri-
butes, power. Augustine's emphasis on the inseparability of operations
(as opposed to the commonality) places the weight of the argument not
on how the actions demonstrate the single power of the common divine
nature, but on how the missional actions of the triune persons are consis-
tent with that one power of their nature. Because of this, a divine action
cannot be predicated of one person without somehow being predicated of
the other two. The location of this argument at the beginning of a sermon
that emphasizes Christ's eternal exercise of baptismal *potestas* suggests
that Augustine understands that *potestas* to be the common divine power
by which the persons of the Trinity inseparably operate.

Two other pieces of evidence support reading Augustine's understand-
ing of Christ's baptismal *potestas* in the context of Latin pro-Nicene the-
ologies of power. First, Augustine's focus on the divine action of sending
suggests further roots in pro-Nicene arguments of common operations.
Here the question is who sent John the Baptist, and the answer is both
Father and Son, operating inseparably. Returning to Ambrose's discus-
sion of John 1:33 and related texts in *spir.* 3.1, we find a similar meditation
on sending. To illustrate that all three divine persons operate in the send-
ing of the Son and of the Spirit, Ambrose combines Christ's baptism at
John 1:33 with the presence of the Spirit upon Christ at Luke 4:18, Christ's
promise that the Father will send the Paraclete at John 14:26, and Christ's
promise that he himself will send the Spirit in John 15:26:

And you hear that the Spirit sent him [the Son] so that when you
read that the Son sends the Spirit, you would not believe the Spirit

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56. *Io. ev. tr.* 5.1.

to be of inferior power (*potestatis*). Therefore both the Father and the Spirit sent the Son. . . . If, therefore, the Son and the Spirit send each other, just as the Father sends, there is no injury of subjection, but a community of power (*potestatis*).[57]

Again, the common sending is a manifestation of the power that is common to the triune persons in the one divine nature. This pro-Nicene understanding of the single divine power operative in sending is the same principle that Augustine deploys in describing the sending of John.

Finally, beyond this articulation of inseparable operations at the beginning of *Io. ev. tr.* 5, another allusion to pro-Nicene power theology appears in Augustine's distinction between the *potestas* of Christ and the *ministerium* of the bishops who baptize. Augustine repeats this distinction throughout *Io. ev. tr.* 5.6–11 in order to clarify that the *ministerium* of sinful bishops does not threaten the integrity of baptism because Christ always retains the *potestas*.[58] Ambrose uses this same distinction in *spir.* 3.18 to support the divinity of the Spirit in an argument of common operations. The text he uses to prove this is, not coincidentally, John 20:22–23:

> Now let us see whether the Spirit forgives sins. But here it is not possible to doubt, since the Lord himself said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whoever's sins you remit, they will be remitted." Behold that sins are forgiven through the Holy Spirit. Men exhibit their ministry in the remission of sin, but they do not exercise the right of some power (*ius alicuius potestatis*).[59] For they forgive sins not in their own name but in the name of the Father and of the Son and

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57. Ambrose, *spir.* 3.1.7–8.

58. Optatus of Milevis has a very similar distinction (*c. Parmen.* 5.3–8), and one might suspect that Augustine is merely repeating this earlier anti-Donatist author. While Augustine would have known this bit of Optatus well, and while it may have informed his general assessment of baptismal agency, the influence of Optatus cannot account for the particular form of the argument that Augustine uses here because Optatus never contrasts *ministerium* with *potestas* the way Ambrose does in the quote below. Therefore, the basic distinction may have its roots in Optatus, but Ambrose provides the key pro-Nicene logic that allows Augustine to redefine baptismal *potestas*.

59. This use of *potestas* seems more "political" than technical, emphasizing as it does the question of whose name the forgiveness of sins is performed in. Even so, the idea that the Spirit, if he is truly God, operates with the power of God in a given action is a prime example of the more general pro-Nicene power theology that affirms that there is one power common to the divine nature by which all three persons operate inseparably.

of the Holy Spirit. They ask, the divinity forgives; the obedience is human, but the munificence is of a heavenly power (*supernae est potestatis*).[60]

Ambrose is not concerned with clarifying a theology of baptism per se. Rather, he builds upon a baptismal theology that he takes for granted in order to demonstrate the unity of the Holy Spirit in the operation that is unique to the Godhead. The terminology he uses, though, distinguishes between what human ministers do and what God does. The *potestas* operative in forgiving sins is definitively divine, and he describes the Spirit as the direct agent of such *potestas*. Humans, however, only perform a *ministerium*; the *potestas* is not theirs. The work of ministers depends upon the divine *potestas* that only God has. For Ambrose, this distinction clarifies that the Spirit must be truly God. For Augustine, though, this understanding of divine *potestas* allows him to undercut the traditional North African understanding of baptismal power that depends upon the integrity of the concrete historical community.

Augustine's unrelenting insistence throughout *Io. ev. tr.* 5 that Christ retains baptismal *potestas* ought to be read with these pro-Nicene trinitarian arguments in mind. The *potestas* that Christ deploys in every baptism is this common *potestas* of the triune God. This defines Augustine's understanding of "valid" baptism. The *potestas* that Christ retains guarantees the validity of any baptism. This *potestas* is the one power of the one divine nature characteristic of pro-Nicene arguments of common and inseparable operations. Because of this, then, the theme of Christ's *potestas* is united to Augustine's other emphasis on John 1:33, that is, that Christ is the one who eternally gives the Holy Spirit. These are connected because the work of the Spirit in baptism is inseparable from the Son's giving of that Spirit. This common and inseparable operation manifests the single *potestas* that obtains in the single divine nature of the Trinity.

The most immediate consequence of Augustine's implementation of pro-Nicene power theology in place of more traditional North African understandings of baptismal power is to ensure the validity of all baptisms performed in the name of the Trinity, no matter the sinfulness, heresy, or schism of the bishop or the larger community. There is another consequence of this adaptation of pro-Nicene principles, though, and it

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60. Ambrose, *spir.* 3.18.137. See also 1.prol.18.

has to do with Augustine's claim that baptism is like the one in whose *potestas* it is performed—a theme he adapts from the traditional North African understanding of Cyprian and the Donatists but which he reorients toward Christ. Christ's baptism, Augustine tells his audience, is, like Christ, divine. It is not until the next sermon on John 1:33 that Augustine fleshes out this claim. It has to do, I contend, with the efficacy of baptism in establishing the unity of the church in the love of the Spirit. This united church that manifests the efficacy of baptism is "divine" because it is itself a result of the unity of power with which the Son and Spirit operate in baptism. The church, established in the inseparable work of Son and Spirit, reflects the unity of the divine persons who operate inseparably in the giving of baptism. I turn now to *Io. ev. tr.* 6 and this interpretation of effective baptism.

The Unity of the Dove

A week after tackling John 1:33 in *Io. ev. tr.* 5, Augustine returns to the text for a second sermon. *Io. ev. tr.* 6 again focuses on the central anti-Donatist issue of baptism and how Augustine's reading of John 1:33 subverts the alleged Donatist understanding of the sacrament as dependent on the purity of the bishop and the insularity of the ecclesial community. In this second sermon, though, Augustine highlights a different aspect of the verse, namely, the appearance of the Holy Spirit as a dove.[61] In unpacking the significance of this columbine manifestation, Augustine also turns from discussing the validity of baptism to identifying what makes for an effective baptism. Whereas in his reinterpretation of baptismal *potestas* Augustine decoupled baptismal validity from the condition of the earthly church, in his portrayal of baptismal efficacy he rejoins the two. Here, though, the unity of the church is the consequence of baptism, rather than simply the prerequisite for it.[62] Augustine depicts this relationship

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61. On the image of the dove, see M.-F. Berrouard, "La Colombe," *BA* 71, 877. Berrouard links Augustine's understanding of the church as dove to earlier anti-Donatist treatises, but he does not acknowledge the way in which the dove of the church is related to the dove of the Holy Spirit.

62. This claim might strike some readers as a bit odd. Typically, Augustine is understood to say that returning to the unity of the church is what leads to effective baptism and the consequent forgiveness of sins. This has been an emphasis in Patout Burns's work (see esp. "Christ and the Holy Spirit.") But, as I describe below, effective baptism is not simply about the forgiveness of sins but even more so about the positive growth in love. This growth in

between effective baptism and the unity of the church by connecting the dove of the Holy Spirit to traditional North African interpretations of the church as the dove of Song of Songs 6:8.[63] Ultimately, though, the connection between the Spirit-dove of John 1:33 and the church-dove of Song of Songs 6:8 by way of baptism reveals a more significant relationship between the Trinity and the church, in which the latter becomes a reflection of, and to some extent a participation in, the life of the former. In connecting the unity of the church to the unity of the Trinity, Augustine brings home the significance of a divine baptism that bestows a divine character in the unity of the church.

The Dove, the Church, and Baptism in Cyprian and the Donatists

There is a strong tradition in Cyprian and the Donatists of reading Song of Songs 6:8, "One is my dove; she is her mother's only one," as emblematic of the church's pure insularity. For this earlier North African tradition, the dove of Song of Songs 6:8 consistently signals the illegitimacy of baptisms outside the one communion that is the singular dove.

In Cyprian's writing against the Novatianists, Song of Songs 6:8 appears alongside the "closed-garden" and "sealed font" of Song of Songs 4:12–13, as well as the baptismal interpretation of the ark/flood narrative in 1 Peter 3:20–1:

> The Holy Spirit, speaking in the person of Christ, declares in the
> Song of Songs that the church is one: "One is my dove, my perfect
> one. She is the only one of her mother, the chosen one of she who

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love—the very love that is the Holy Spirit—only takes place in the unity of the church, but it is also what establishes that unity. The Holy Spirit working effectively in the heart of the baptized yearns for and clings to unity. Thus, the unity of the church is not something that exists prior to baptism; rather, it is brought about by the effective work of baptism. One may still accurately say that joining the unity of the church is a prerequisite for baptismal efficacy, but unity is also a consequence of effective baptism.

63. Michael Cameron offers an illuminating analysis of Augustine's reinterpretation of Song 6:8 (along with Song 4:12–15). See Cameron, "Augustine's Use of Song of Songs against the Donatists," in *Augustine: Biblical Exegete*, ed. Frederick van Fleteren (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), 99–127. However, although he references Augustine's use of Song 6:8 in *Io. ev. tr.* 5, Cameron does not discuss *Io. ev. tr.* 6 at all. Because of this, Cameron does not pick up on the connection between the Spirit and the church that the dove makes possible, an odd omission given Cameron's emphasis on the role of *caritas* in uniting the members of the body of Christ.

bore her." Again the Spirit says about her, "An enclosed garden is my sister, my bride, a font sealed, a well of living water." Yet if the bride of Christ, that is, the church, is an enclosed garden, then an enclosed thing cannot stand open to strangers and profane persons. And if the font is sealed, then one who has been placed outside and does not have access to the font is not able to drink from it or be sealed at it. And if the well of living water is also one and this same one is inside, then someone who has been placed outside is not able to be vivified or sanctified by that water, from which only those who are inside have been given permission to drink or to use at all. Peter also shows that the church is one and that only those who are in the church are able to be baptized, saying, "In the ark of Noah only a few people, that is, eight souls, were saved through the water. And in the same way baptism will save you, too." Thus he proves and testifies that the one ark of Noah was a type of the one church. If it had been possible at that time for one who was not in the ark of Noah to be saved through water in that baptism of the world, which was being expiated and purified, then it would be possible now for one to be vivified through baptism who is not in the church, to which alone baptism has been granted.[64]

In this long passage, Cyprian clarifies what it means for the church to be the dove of Song of Songs 6:8, particularly what it means for that dove to be one. The oneness of the church-dove is manifest in its insularity and exclusivity. Moreover, Cyprian connects this insularity to the sacrament of baptism and its sanctifying effect. This insular nature of the one church-dove guards against external pollution and maintains both the validity and efficacy of baptism. The fountain of living water is sealed and is accessible only to those within the boundaries of this single communion. There is only one ark, and only within its integrity could one pass through the waters and into life. So the church must be sealed and integral. The Novatianist schism presents a threat to this image of the church. Legitimating their communion's ability to baptize would undermine the

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64. Cyprian, *ep.* 69.2.1–2. For Cyprian's use of Song 6:8 alone, see *unit. eccl.* 4. For Song 4:8–13 alone, see *epp.* 74.11.1 and 75.14–15. For 1 Pet 3:20–21 alone, see *unit. eccl.* 6; *epp.* 74.11.3, 75.15.1. Michael Fahey, *Cyprian and the Bible: a Study of Third-Century Exegesis* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1971), 522–523, does not note the 1 Pet references from *unit. eccl.* and *ep.* 75 in his survey of citations. Though these are less explicit than the other two that I note, I believe there is an implicit reading of 1 Pet 3 in Cyprian's other references to the ark.

boundary that secures the purity and power of the one church and its sacrament. For Cyprian, this guarded and insular purity is what it means for the church-dove to be one. The unity and unicity of the church precede and guard the integrity of baptism.

Song of Songs 6:8 and 4:8–13 also become central texts for the Donatists. Parmenian, the Donatist bishop of Carthage from 362 to 391, makes use of Cyprian's extensive exegesis of Song of Songs to found the validity of Donatist sacraments upon the possession of the "gifts" of the church, including the baptismal font. Song of Songs 6:8, when joined with Song of Songs 4:12–13, demonstrates the integrity of the uncorrupted, sealed fountain by which the Donatists can claim the possession of the Spirit given in baptism.[65] Likewise, Parmenian and other Donatists develop arguments to define their church as the typological ark of 1 Peter 3.[66] Again, as in Cyprian, Song of Songs 6:8 and the associated texts ascribe a singularity to the church that precedes and guards the integrity of baptism, even though Parmenian adds a layer of complexity to this image by introducing more specific criteria for identifying the proper community who has the Spirit, and consequently, baptism.

This joint Cyprian-Donatist exegetical heritage reads these texts as depicting an exclusive and pure communion. The church is the dove of Song of Songs 6:8 because of its singularity, and that singularity is defined by the sealed garden of Song of Songs 4 and the insular ark of 1 Peter 3. One passage from Cyprian, however, pushes against this grain and anticipates more what Augustine will do with the relationship between the dove and the church. In *On the Unity of the Catholic Church*, both in 251 against the "laxist" party and in 256 against the rigorist schism of Novatian,[67] Cyprian urges a return to ecclesial unity. To describe this unity, he alludes to the Spirit's manifestation as a dove at Christ's baptism:

> Therefore also the Holy Spirit came as a dove, which is a simple and joyful animal, having neither bitter bile, nor savage teeth, nor violently tearing claws. . . . They acknowledge the concord of peace with the kiss of their beaks. . . . This is the simplicity that ought to

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65. See Augustine, *bapt.* 1.11.15, 3.17.22, 5.27.38, 6.3.5, 6.40.77. See also, Maureen Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa*, 96–105.

66. See esp. Optatus, *c. Parmen.* 5.1; Augustine, *bapt.* 4.2.3, 4.28.39.

67. There has recently been a debate about the proper dating of the *Textus Receptus*, viz., the revised version of the treatise. Damien Van den Eyde and M. Bévenot established the

be learned in the church; this is the charity that must be obtained,
so that love of brotherhood might imitate doves.[68]

In this excerpt, Cyprian alludes to many of the same characteristics that
Augustine will: the simplicity of the dove, the gentleness of its kiss, and the
ecclesial peace that is the necessary emulation of the Spirit-dove. Cyprian,
however, does not clarify how the church comes to possess these charac-
teristics of the dove, or what the relationship between the Spirit-dove and
the church-dove is, aside from as example and imitator. These connec-
tions are exactly what Augustine will emphasize in his second sermon on
John 1:33.

For Cyprian and the Donatists, the "one dove" of Song of Songs 6:8 is
the church that has the sealed font of Song of Songs 4 and which alone
passes through the waters of baptism like the ark through the flood in
1 Peter 3. For Augustine, though, the oneness of the church-dove is a
result of effective baptism, not simply the necessary prerequisite for it.
The crux of this reorientation of the relationship between church and
baptism is Augustine's identification of the Spirit-dove of John 1:33 as the
hermeneutical key for other scriptural dove images, including the eccle-
sial dove of Song of Songs 6:8. This results in baptism not depending
on the columbine nature of the church, but the columbine nature of the
church depending on the effective work of the Spirit-dove who imparts
the traits of the dove to those in whom he works effective baptism. There
are two key characteristics of the dove that the Spirit imparts to the church
through baptism: moaning and simplicity. Both of these attributes ought
to be understood in relation to Augustine's pro-Nicene heritage, and both
of them elucidate what it means for the unity of the church to be estab-
lished by and therefore reflect the unity of the Trinity.

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standard date of 256 based on parallels in scripture use between *unit. eccl.* and the epistles
of 256 (*epp.* 72–73, especially). See Van den Eyde, "La Double Édition du *De unitate* de saint
Cyprien," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 29 (1933): 5–24; and Bévenot, *Cyprian: De Lapsis and
De Ecclesiae Catholicae Unitate* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972). Stuart G. Hall has chal-
lenged this methodology and conclusion, proposing an earlier date of 252. See Hall, "The
Versions of Cyprian's *De Unitate*, 4–5: Bévenot's Dating Revisited," *JTS* ns 55 (2004): 138–146.
However, I side with Karl Shuve, who finds Stuart's dismissal of Bévenot's method uncon-
vincing and thus maintains the traditional dating of fall 256 for the revision of *unit. eccl.* See
Shuve, "Cyprian of Carthage's Writings from the Rebaptism Controversy: Two Revisionary
Proposals Reconsidered," *JTS* ns 61 (2010): 627–643.

68. Cyprian, *unit. eccl.* 9.

The Moaning of the Dove

Moaning is the first characteristic that Augustine believes the Spirit-dove of John 1:33 brings about in the church-dove of Song of Songs 6:8 through effective baptism. To moan like a dove means two things for Augustine. First, it means to pine for the true good, the heavenly homeland from which we are on sojourn in this life. This type of moaning represents the reformation of desire that lies at the heart of Augustine's moral episte-mology that I described in Chapter 1. Second, a church that moans like the dove moans out of desire for unity within the earthly members of the church. Augustine describes these two types of moaning as the marks of effective baptism that the Donatists, by remaining in schism, necessarily lack. In this way, the unity of the church is a consequence of effective bap-tism, not simply a prerequisite for it.

In the first part of *Io. ev. tr.* 6, Augustine describes moaning as an expression of our desire for heavenly beatitude, a desire that the Spirit cultivates in us. "Moaning," Augustine tells his audience, "is characteris-tic of the dove."[69] He presents this as a common zoological assumption[70] and connects this behavior to the moaning of the Spirit in Romans 8:26. Thus the Spirit's columbine manifestation represents what the Spirit does within the heart of the Christian: "He works within us to reveal that we are wandering, and he teaches us to sigh for our homeland, and we moan with that very desire."[71] The moaning of the dove becomes the moaning of the sojourning church for heaven and for God. In baptism, then, the Spirit-dove make us into moaning doves in a way that brings about the reformation of desire that I highlighted in Chapter 1 as a common element of Augustine's trinitarian and ecclesiological discourses.

This image of the moaning dove also suggests to Augustine a sym-bolic foil for the Spirit's work in the church: the raven.[72] Augustine con-trasts the moaning of the dove to the "raucous voices" of ravens. Whereas the dove moans with the love of God, pining for its homeland, the raven

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69. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.2.

70. See Pliny, *nat. hist.* 10.52.106. The moaning of the dove is not emphasized in Latin eccle-sial authors before Ambrose, and even he usually mentions it without the pneumatological or ecclesial connection. See Ambrose, *hex.* 3.1.4, 5.12.39.

71. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.2.

72. On the image of the raven, see Brent D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 303–306.

shrieks with arrogance, content with "the pleasure of carnal things . . . in a vain happiness."[73] Ravens have a characteristic moaning, too, but they moan only "in earthly unhappiness. . . . They do not moan with the love of God; they do not moan with the Spirit."[74] The moaning that characterizes the church-dove is a pure moaning, a moaning guided by the Spirit-dove toward love of God.

This contrast between doves and ravens allows Augustine to make a more explicitly anti-Donatist move in his appropriation of dove-church imagery. This move involves an interpretation of 1 Peter 3 that redefines the text as indicative of the necessarily intermixed nature of the church. Though the typological reading of the flood in 1 Peter 3 does not mention a dove, Augustine retreats to the original flood pericope of Genesis 8:6–13, which does: the dove that Noah sent from the ark to search for dry land. Before the dove, however, Noah sent a raven. Building upon his contrast between doves and ravens, Augustine affirms:

> The ark contained both kinds. If the ark figured the church, certainly you see that it is necessary, in this flood of the world, that the church contain both kinds, both raven and dove. Who are the ravens? Those who seek what is their own. Who are the doves? Those who seek that which is Christ's.[75]

Augustine sees in the raven, which did not return to the ark, a type of both those who have not been taught how to love properly, who do not have the Holy Spirit working in them, and those who leave the church in search, not of God, but of their own desires. This reinterpretation cuts against the Cyprian-Donatist reading of 1 Peter 3 in two ways: first, by suggesting that if one embraces the ark as an image of the church, one must embrace both dove and raven within it,[76] and second, by identifying those

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73. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.2.

74. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.2.

75. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.2.

76. This first cut is what J. Patout Burns observes in "Appropriating Augustine Appropriating Cyprian," *AugStud* 36, no. 1 (2005): 113–130. Burns unpacks the way Augustine exploits Cyprian's toleration of secretly sinful bishops in combination with Cyprian's affirmation about the efficacy of the united, charitable community to turn away God's wrath. Thus, Burns shows, Augustine uses Cyprian to argue for (1) the inscrutability of the human heart, (2) the consequent inevitability of a mixed church, and (3) the power of the Holy Spirit as the

Donatists who are unwilling to enter into communion with Catholics as ravens who do not possess the Holy Spirit. This second cut not only condemns the Donatists for lacerating the true church and for not returning to the one true ark, but it also invites them back into communion with this new understanding of the intermixed church.

So far the issue of baptism has remained only implicit in Augustine's discussion of the moaning dove. His audience is to understand that effective baptism accomplishes the communication of columbine traits from the Spirit-dove to the church. Augustine makes this connection more explicit, though, as he moves to the second type of moaning that characterizes the columbine church. The church-dove not only moans for its heavenly beatitude; it also moans for ecclesial unity in this world. This ecclesial moaning arises as Augustine articulates an understandable Donatist objection to the idea that all baptisms, even those outside the true church, are legitimate because of the eternal agency of Christ's *potestas* in giving the Spirit:

> [The Donatists say:] "If I have received [baptism], there is nothing which you might give me. . . . Why do you wish to make me a Catholic, when there is nothing more that you are going to give me, and you confess that I have already received that which you say you have?"[77]

With the central issue of baptism back at the forefront, Augustine identifies columbine moaning as that which the Donatists lack so long as they remain outside the Catholic communion. Addressing his opponents in a rhetorical apostrophe, Augustine implores the Donatists,

> Come; the dove is calling you. It calls you by moaning. . . . Come, you will rejoice if you come; you will moan indeed amid the tribulations of this wandering, but you will rejoice in hope. Come where the dove is, about whom it was said, "One is my dove."[78]

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love poured into the hearts of the whole community to forgive even secret sins, thus removing the primacy of episcopal purity as the *sine qua non* of sacramental efficacy.

77. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.13.

78. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.15.

Augustine can now appeal to the church-dove of Song of Songs 6:8 as a manifestation of the unity for which the Spirit-dove teaches us to moan, rather than as a symbol of insular ecclesial purity. Moreover, as a response to the Donatist objection, this statement clarifies how this moaning for unity is a consequence of effective baptism. Though baptism outside the church is still valid, it is not effective because it does not cultivate love.[79] Because they have abandoned the unity of the church, Donatists have failed to learn to moan out of love; they do not have the fruit of the Holy Spirit with which they were baptized.[80]

As an illustration of the relationship between moaning and unity, Augustine next shifts from addressing the Donatists to addressing his audience of fellow Catholics: "My brothers, I am speaking to you: call them with moaning."[81] The moaning of the church for those outside expresses the desire that the baptism of the Donatists would be made effective through joining in Catholic union, that those outside might, through such union, learn to moan with love for that primary object of our reformed desire, our heavenly beatitude. In one sense, then, participation in the unity of the church is what effects this moaning. But, more significant, this columbine moaning is what preserves the church's unity and brings one into it. In this way, the unity of the church is a result of effective baptism, not simply the prerequisite for it.

This understanding of the church moaning for unity leads Augustine back to his reinterpretation of 1 Peter 3. In this ark of doves and ravens, the doves moan for those outside. Softening his rhetoric, Augustine suggests that the Donatists may not necessarily be ravens who have left the ark only to die; they may in fact be doves, if only they would grab the olive branch of peace and return to the one dove of the church. He suggests that they, too, could learn to moan for unity, and he again encourages his audience to moan in love in order to woo the wayward doves back into the ark.[82] Augustine thus makes 1 Peter 3 not a symbol of the church's inviolable purity, but a call to the Donatists to return from the flood of the world, to make their baptism effective and profitable, to learn the love of unity that only the Holy Spirit can both teach and give.

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79. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.13. See also, *bapt.* 6.1.1.

80. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.14.

81. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.15.

82. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.19.

Up to this point, I have shown that Augustine redefines what it means to call the church the "one dove" of Song of Songs 6:8 by describing how, in effective baptism, the Spirit-dove of John 1:33 cultivates the columbine behavior of moaning that directs our love to God and to the unity of the church. By incorporating 1 Peter 3 and the symbolic foil of the raven, Augustine describes how separation from the church implies the lack of such love, even as he affirms the presence of doves and ravens in the ark that is a type of the church. In this way, effective baptism manifests itself through the unity of the church that it establishes. It is not simply that baptism is not effective outside the unity, but unity is a necessary consequence of what baptism actually does beyond the forgiveness of sins.

There is, however, another dynamic at work in this discussion of moaning that once again brings Augustine's anti-Donatist theology of baptism back to Latin pro-Nicene principles. Moaning is not a new theme in North African ecclesiological disputes. For Cyprian, moaning characterizes the truly repentant Christian who has lapsed in the face of persecution. Cyprian is concerned, on the one hand, that laxists not prevent the fallen from engaging in the appropriate acts of contrition that could win God's forgiveness[83] and, on the other hand, that the rigorists not deny the hope of peace to those who honestly moan for that forgiveness.[84] Furthermore, Cyprian describes himself and the church in general as moaning with grief at the loss of so many from persecution and apostasy.[85]

Beyond Cyprian, however, Hilary and Ambrose evince a theology of moaning that more closely resembles what Augustine does in *Io. ev. tr.* 6. First, both Hilary and Ambrose cite Romans 8:26, as Augustine does, to connect the moaning of the Christian to the work of the Spirit who intercedes and moans for us, teaching us to grieve our sin and pine for spiritual goods.[86] Second, Hilary and Ambrose both introduce the subject of moaning into their Christological and trinitarian theology. They both depict moaning as something alien to the divine nature, identifying the moans of the suffering Christ as a stumbling block, leading some to deny

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83. Cyprian, *epp.* 34.2.1, 59.13.2; *laps.* 16.

84. Cyprian, *epp.* 55.29.1, 68.1.1.

85. Cyprian, *laps.* 4.

86. Ambrose, *ep.* 23.5; *spir.* 3.11.70–71; Hilary, *tr. s. Ps.* 142.12.

his divinity by not understanding his incarnation.[87] This demonstrates a pro-Nicene concern not to confuse scriptural references to Christ's humanity with those to his divinity: moaning cannot be characteristic of the Trinity because it presumes a level of passibility and mutability from which the divine nature—in all three persons—is free.

Like his discussion of inseparable operations and the unity of divine power at the beginning of *Io. ev. tr.* 5, Augustine includes a phrase at the beginning of *Io. ev. tr.* 6 that suggests that this pro-Nicene concern informs his understanding of the moaning that the Spirit-dove cultivates in the life of the church-dove. After identifying moaning as characteristic of the dove and as therefore part of what the appearance of the Spirit as a dove at Christ's baptism reveals, Augustine qualifies this claim:

> My brothers, are we to say that the Spirit moans where he has perfect and eternal beatitude with the Father and the Son? For the Holy Spirit is God, just as the Son of God is God and the Father is God. Three times I have said "God," but I have not said three gods. The one God is three, not three gods, because Father and Son and Holy Spirit are one God. This you know most of all. Therefore the Holy Spirit does not moan on his own account in that Trinity, in that beatitude, in that eternity of substance; but he moans in us because he makes us moan.[88]

Augustine's assertion that moaning cannot be a quality of the Spirit's eternal nature represents the same principle that governs Hilary's and Ambrose's denial that Christ moans in his divinity. For Hilary and Ambrose, the fact that moaning is alien to the divine nature requires a hermeneutic that distinguishes between human and divine actions within the complex subject of the incarnate Christ. Augustine evinces a similar concern when he delineates between what the Spirit does in his eternal beatitude with the Father and Son and what he does in us.

Augustine constructs a rhetorical contrast between the Spirit's intra-trinitarian life and that which the Spirit brings about in the church

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87. Ambrose, *fid*. 1.14.87; Hilary, *trin*. 10.34, 11.2. For the more general concern in pro-Nicene authors to account for the suffering of Christ, see Gerard Remy, "Passivités du Christ, leur interprétation chez Grégoire de Nazianze et Augustin d'Hippone," in *La christologie et la Trinité chez les Pères*, ed. Marie-Anne Vannier (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2013), 119–153.

88. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.2.

through effective baptism. The beatitude of the Spirit *in se* sets into stark relief our sojourning absence from our heavenly homeland. Yet this contrast results not in despair, but in a desire to return to that homeland. And as I demonstrated in Chapter 1, by the cultivation of this proper love, we come to participate in the life of the heavenly Jerusalem, and indeed in the life of God, the *Idipsum*. This suggests that the second type of moaning, the moaning for ecclesial unity, ought also to be read as a reflection of what the Spirit enjoys in his intra-trinitarian life with the Father and Son. If this is the case, then to moan for ecclesial unity is to moan for a participation in that blessed life of the Trinity. To verify this suspicion, I turn now to the second columbine characteristic that effective baptism imparts to the church-dove: simplicity.

The Simplicity of the Dove

The columbine trait of simplicity has two levels of significance. At its most basic level, dove-like simplicity implies a singleness of heart, the lack of guile that defines those who are "simple as doves" (Matt 10:16) due to the Spirit poured forth in baptism.[89] This basic sense of moral simplicity, though, connects to the deeper sense of the simplicity that establishes unity out of multiplicity. Augustine develops this connection between moral simplicity and ecclesial simplicity through three progressive moves in *Io. ev. tr.* 6 that culminate in an interpretation of baptismal efficacy that, building on a pro-Nicene reading of Matthew 28:19, makes the simplicity of the united church a reflection and a consequence of the simplicity of the triune God.

First, Augustine connects two contrasting manifestations of the Holy Spirit: the descending dove of Jesus's baptism and the tongues of fire at Pentecost.[90] Augustine juxtaposes the "fervor" of the many flames with

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89. In highlighting the simplicity and lack of guile in the dove, Augustine echoes Tertullian, *bapt.* 8; *adv. Val.* 2–3. Tertullian ties his reading of the dove more closely to Matt 10:16 ("Behold, I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be shrewd as snakes and simple as doves"). In *Io. ev. tr.* 6, Augustine only cites the first half of that verse (*Io. ev. tr.* 6.5), but it is fair to suggest that the rest of the verse serves as the background for much of his "simple" language. See also, Cyprian, *Quir.* 3.87; *unit. eccl.* 9.

90. Augustine appears to be the first Latin author to highlight Christ's baptism and Pentecost as the two main revelations of the Spirit. No pre-Augustinian Latin author holds the two in such close juxtaposition, with the exception of Ps-Cyprian, *rebapt.* 18. Even here, though, the emphasis is not on the two manifestations as mutually illuminating, but rather on the Spirit's freedom to appear and operate as he likes beyond the authoritative administration of pure bishops.

the "simplicity" of the one dove.[91] In the immediate context of the homily, these two manifestations of the Spirit serve to defend the consistency of Catholics in implementing the fervor of imperial force while still claiming to desire a unity grounded in love. To illustrate this principle, Augustine lifts up the proto-martyr Stephen as an example of the way a Christian ought to "adhere to the unity of the dove" through a gentleness that is also vehement, reflecting both the simplicity of the dove and the fervor of the many flames. Thus Augustine emphasizes the moral kind of simplicity while introducing the connection between multiplicity and unity.[92]

Augustine's second move in explicating the simplicity of the dove returns to his established foil, the raven. Both doves and ravens have a "kiss," but the nature of the dove's kiss is soft and peaceful, whereas the raven's kiss is sharp and lacerating.[93] Furthermore, doves feed on the "fruits of the earth," but ravens are "fed by death."[94] That is to say, doves are innocent, not taking life for their food, whereas ravens not only cause but even thrive upon death. To make the ecclesiological implications of these two kisses explicit, Augustine clarifies, "Those who have torn the church apart are feeding on the dead."[95] He distinguishes between those who have the Holy Spirit, who promote peace in the church, and those who do not have the Spirit, who lacerate and divide the church. Here Augustine yokes the moral simplicity that the Spirit-dove imparts in baptism to the peaceful enjoyment of ecclesial unity that is a result of effective baptism.

Finally, Augustine moves from this moral simplicity to the simplicity of the divine nature and connects the unity of the Trinity to the unity of the church through the baptismal commission of Matthew 28:19, "Go baptize the nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." As with his reading of the one dove of John 1:33 and the many

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91. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.3.

92. Though Augustine does not explicitly connect the unity/multiplicity of the dove and the flames to the Trinity here, such a use of Pentecost is not uncommon for him: *c. Cresc.* 2.17; *Io. ev. tr.* 32.6–7; *en. Ps.* 132.2; *s.* 71.19, 227, 229I. Émilien Lamirande notes, "Les réflexions d'Augustin sur la Pentecôte ... développent surtout le theme de l'harmonie dans la diversité ou de la catholicité dans l'unité." Lamirande, "L'annonce de l'unité dans l'universalité. Un aspect de la théologie augustinienne de la Pentecôte," *Spiritus: cahiers de spiritualité missionnaire* 19 (1964): 158. For these references, I am indebted to Anthony Dupont, "Augustine's Preaching on Grace at Pentecost," *SP* 61 (2013): 3–14.

93. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.4. For a discussion of how doves kiss, see Pliny, *nat. hist.* 10.79.158.

94. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.4.

95. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.4.

flames of Pentecost, Augustine emphasizes the dynamic of multiplicity and unity in this one verse: the many nations and the single name of the Trinity. I want to spend extra time unpacking this move because in it Augustine unites the many nations in the one church through baptism in the single, simple name of the Trinity.

Augustine's engagement with Matthew 28:19 here has three parts, which I will label A, B, and C. In section A, the plural "nations" of Matthew 28:19 affords Augustine a chance to cite one of his favorite anti-Donatist verses, Psalm 2:8, "I will give you the nations as your inheritance and the ends of the earth as your possession."[96] As usual, Augustine emphasizes that Christ's inheritance includes all the earth, not just the Donatist parts.

For the moment I will skip section B and turn first to section C. Here, Augustine returns to his dove/flames contrast to depict what happens when the plural nations of Matt 28:19 are baptized:

> The apostles were sent to the nations, and if to the nations, then to all tongues. The Holy Spirit, divided in tongues but united in the dove, signified this. On the one hand the tongues are divided; on the other they are united in the dove. The tongues of the nations have been brought into concord, but the one tongue of Africa is discordant? What could be more evident, my brothers? In the dove, unity; in the tongues of the nations, communion.[97]

Unlike section A, Augustine here emphasizes how the many nations are united in the church-dove. The "tongues" of fire are the many languages of the nations that are contrasted to the oneness of the dove. These two manifestations of the Spirit, the Pentecost flames and the baptismal dove, become images of the church, an interpretation made possible by the connection of the Spirit-dove from John 1:33 and the church-dove of Song of Songs 6:8. Juxtaposing the flames and doves, Augustine offers a depiction of the church that is established by the gift of the Spirit by Christ in baptism, a unity brought out of multiplicity.

The real heart of this passage, though, comes in section B. After he cites Psalm 2:8 as testimony to Christ's worldwide heritage but before he

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96. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.9. For more anti-Donatist uses of this verse in our sermon series, see *en. Ps.* 119.7, 122.2, 126.9, 126.13.

97. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.10.

unites the many nations in the unity of the church-dove, Augustine offers a reflection on the singular name of the Trinity from the baptismal commission of Matthew 28:19:

> This is one God, because it is not in the "names" of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, but in the "name" of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Where you hear one "name," there is one God.[98]

This is a well-worn piece of Latin pro-Nicene exegesis. It appears in Gaudentius and in Ambrose,[99] and Augustine himself uses it against Maximinus.[100] All of these examples highlight the presence of the singular "name" and the absence of the plural "names." The singularity of the divine name in the baptismal commission is evidence for the simplicity of the divine nature.

Augustine's placement of this trinitarian reading of Matthew 28:19 between his reflection on the many nations of the same verse suggests that the way from the many nations that are baptized to the one dove of ecclesial unity is the unity of the triune God. This, Augustine suggests, is what happens in that baptism which follows the commission of Matthew 28:19. The many nations are brought into one church by the operation of the Trinity who has but one name and one nature. Given what I have demonstrated previously, that the love of the Holy Spirit connects the unity of the Trinity to the unity of the church, and that the validity of baptism in Christ's eternal *potestas* whereby he gives the Spirit is founded upon the unity of power and nature in the godhead, and that the Spirit causes us to moan for that which he already has in union with the Father and the Son—given all this, Augustine's pro-Nicene argument about the single name invoked in baptism must be read as signifying the divine source of ecclesial unity that is a result of baptizing the many nations in that one name.

The simplicity of the dove that is the unity of the church is a consequence of the simplicity of the triune God who operates inseparably in baptism. This is why the moaning of the dove is directed toward both the heavenly beatitude and the unity of the earthly church. Christ, in giving

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98. *Io. ev. tr.* 6.9.

99. Gaudentius, *tr.* 14.20; Ambrose, *fid.* 1.1.8; *spir.* 1.13.132.

100. *c. Max.* 2.22.3.

the Spirit as a manifestation of the one power of the triune God, imparts a desire for a similar unity into the hearts of those who are baptized. This in turn is why effective baptism requires a return to the one true church. In one sense, it is within that unity that the baptized Christian learns to love and receives the fruit of the gift of the Spirit. In a deeper sense, though, to return to unity is itself a manifestation of the Spirit's work within the baptized Christian. Effective baptism makes many into one because baptism itself is an operation of the Trinity's one power and nature. This echoes the traditional "x from x" language of baptism whereby the sinless bishop or community who possesses the Spirit communicates that Spirit, and therefore the forgiveness of sins, to the baptized. For Augustine, though, the "x from x" logic is governed by the unity of divine power. What the church receives in baptism is a share in that divine unity, though in an imperfect, earthly way. In moaning for the unity of the church, the church moans for a more perfect participation in divine unity in anticipation of our final heavenly beatitude. This is the consequence of a valid and effective baptism whose source is the triune God.

Conclusion

In redefining the nature of baptism, Augustine also redefines the nature of the church that is established by baptism. He does so by making both the validity and efficacy of baptism expressions of the unity of power that obtains in the triune nature and is expressed in the inseparable operations of the divine persons. Building upon earlier arguments from common operations, especially the pneumatological precedents of Ambrose, Augustine defines baptism as primarily a trinitarian work in which the Son eternally gives the Holy Spirit as an expression of their own eternal unity. Because of this, the power operative in baptism is not the authority of the bishop or of the community, but that power which is concomitant with the single divine nature. The validity of baptism, therefore, does not depend upon the condition of the earthly church or its members.

Having divorced the validity of baptism from the condition of the earthly church, Augustine identifies the love of ecclesial unity as the key mark of effective baptism. The unity of the church, then, is not an insularity that protects the purity of the baptismal font. Instead, the effective work of the Holy Spirit, who appeared as a dove, establishes the church as a dove by teaching its true members to moan for a simplicity that mirrors

the unity of the one divine name in which they are baptized. Augustine again builds upon Latin pro-Nicene predecessors to emphasize the perfect simplicity of the divine nature in contrast to the multiplicity that defines the created world. The unity of the church, established by the power of the simple unity of the triune God, becomes a mirror of and, in some way, a participation in the life of the Trinity as the Son gives the Spirit to his own body.

This trinitarian reconstrual of baptism allows Augustine to upend the Donatists' sacramental theology. The Donatists not only usurp the role of Christ in bestowing the Holy Spirit in baptism, but in doing so they separate themselves and those they baptize from the unity of the church that is established by this intra-trinitarian giving. Failure to return to the unity of the church is evidence of an ineffective (though still valid) baptism because the Spirit given by the Son as an expression of the singular power of the divine nature brings about a desire for unity in the one in whom the Spirit effectively works. This continues the "x from x" logic of earlier baptismal theology, but now that which is received is not the purity of an individual bishop but the supreme unity of the Trinity into whose life the church is incorporated by valid and effective baptism.

Conclusion

APPRECIATING AUGUSTINE'S TRINITARIAN ECCLESIOLOGY

IN THE *CONFESSIONS*, Augustine recounts the story of how Simplicianus convinced Marius Victorinus to be baptized and join the church. The proud philosopher protested, believing that embracing proper doctrine was sufficient: "Do walls make a Christian?" he challenged.[1] Eventually, Simplicianus prevailed upon him to make a public declaration of his faith by submitting to baptism and embracing not just the teachings of the church but the church itself. This story serves as an exemplum for the young Augustine as he is wooed by grace back into the arms of his Mother, the church. The proud soul must humble itself, recognizing the limits of its fallen reason and receiving the faith of the church within the life of the church. Both Victorinus and Augustine had to learn that the search to know and love God is inseparable from participation in the church that is the body of Christ enlivened by the Holy Spirit. This understanding of the church also lies behind Augustine's use of pro-Nicene principles and exegesis in our sermons series.

I have attempted to show that these anti-Donatist sermons of 406–407 provide a unique opportunity to espy the relationship between Augustine's trinitarian theology and his ecclesiology. The story of Victorinus suggests the most basic connection between the two topics: theological speculation is fruitless outside the church. This is so, however, not simply because the individual fallen human is unable to cultivate proper knowledge and love

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1. *conf.* 8.2.4.

on her own, though this is certainly true. Rather, the church is the necessary locus of all true trinitarian theology because, for Augustine, the church is itself trinitarian. As I discussed in the Introduction, however, this claim ought not to be read in terms of late twentieth-century trinitarian ecclesiologies. The church is not, for Augustine, a perichoretic community of persons analogous to the communion of the divine persons. What, then, does it mean to speak of Augustine's "trinitarian ecclesiology"?

From what I have demonstrated in the preceding chapters, Augustine's anti-Donatist ecclesiology may be considered trinitarian in three ways. First, Augustine uses pro-Nicene exegesis and principles to construct his image of the church. These include the pro-Nicene prosopological exegesis of John 3:13 that connects the church as the body of Christ to the grammatical subject of Christ. They also include his appropriation of pro-Nicene readings of Acts 4:32a and Romans 5:5 to show how the Spirit establishes unity in the church through the love of God that the Spirit himself is. And they include the principles of common and inseparable operations, grounded in the unity of divine nature and power, which safeguard the validity of baptism and the integral unity of the church that baptism establishes.

The second way in which Augustine's anti-Donatist ecclesiology is trinitarian is that the church is integral to his trinitarian theology. As I showed in Chapter 1, a key aspect of Augustine's trinitarian theology is his moral epistemology, that is, his conception of how we grow in knowledge and love of God. Not only does the church as an object of theological reflection require the same sort of intellectual and affective maturation, but, more important, the church is the primary vehicle for the reformation of thought and desire that brings us to contemplation of the triune God.

The final way in which Augustine's anti-Donatist ecclesiology is trinitarian is that the unity of the church is the consequence of trinitarian action that brings the ecclesial community into the life of the Trinity. This occurs through our incorporation into the body of Christ by the love of the Spirit who is given by Christ in baptism. This final and most significant dynamic of Augustine's trinitarian ecclesiology emerges from the previous two points. Augustine not only uses pro-Nicene exegesis and principles to construct his ecclesiology, but in doing so, he shows how the common and inseparable operations of the triune persons are the foundation of the church's unity. Similarly, the church is the vehicle for the reformation of thought and desire that is central to Augustine's trinitarian theology precisely because that reformation comes about through our incorporation

into Christ, who raises us to sight of his own divinity, and through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who reorients our desire toward love of God and neighbor. The unity of the church is a consequence of the unity of the triune God, but not because of an ontological parallel between the two unities.[2] Rather, the united operation of the triune persons establishes the church as one in such a way that our unity shares in their unity.

By way of conclusion, I want to show how this trinitarian understanding of Augustine's ecclesiology can illuminate his understanding of martyrdom, a key ecclesiological feature for Donatists and North African Christianity more generally. This will illustrate how each of the foregoing elements relate to an ecclesiological argument that seems to have nothing to do with trinitarian issues. This exercise will both review the major points of my argument and show how it might facilitate further appreciation of Augustine's trinitarian ecclesiology.

The most powerful characteristic of the Donatist church is its self-styling as the church of the martyrs.[3] Implicit in this identification is a condemnation of the so-called *traditores* for forsaking the saints and collaborating with—or, at best, acquiescing to—the persecuting powers of empire. Studies of martyrdom in the last few decades have highlighted the way the relics and festivals of martyrs constitute the space in which ecclesial power, identity, and boundaries are negotiated, both in the pre- and post-Constantinian eras.[4] Nowhere is the connection between the martyrs and the identity of the church stronger than in early North African Christianity. The Donatists are the example par excellence of how the experience and rhetoric of martyrdom could consolidate the legitimacy

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2. Augustine's use of Acts 4:32a that I examined in Chapter 3 might seem to suggest such an ontological parallel in the unity of the church and the unity of the Trinity, but the pro-Nicene reading of this verse that Augustine builds upon only assumes such a parallel for rhetorical effect. The only way in which there is any sort of analogy between the two types of unity is in the work of the Spirit and not in the ontological meaning of personhood.

3. On this theme, see Bernhard Kriegbaum, *Kirche der Traditoren oder Kirche der Märtyrer: Die Vorgeschichte des Donatismus* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia-Verlag, 1986), esp. 59–67 and 150–172; and Maureen Tilley, introduction to *Donatist Martyr Stories: The Church in Conflict in Roman North Africa,* TTH 24 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996).

4. J. Patout Burns and Robin M. Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa: The Development of Its Practices and Beliefs* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 519–551; Candida R. Moss, *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Robin Darling Young, *In Procession before the World: Martyrdom as Public Liturgy in Early Christianity* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001); Peter Brown, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

of one communion and the complicit corruption of another. Although an earlier generation of anti-Donatist authors, particularly Optatus of Milevis, sought to undermine the historical basis for the Donatists' claims,[5] Augustine knows that he must go a step further. Our sermon series exemplifies this further step in which he redefines the theological nature of martyrdom and persecution.[6]

For Augustine, a martyr is defined not by her death per se but by the virtue of hope that she manifests in her death. Similarly, physical suffering does not necessarily signify persecution. The Donatists, who claim to be persecuted, are simply being corrected and directed toward the unity of the true church, whereas they themselves inflict spiritual persecution by leading Christians away from the true church and rebaptizing them. Augustine does not deploy pro-Nicene exegesis or principles to redefine what it means to be a martyr or what the true nature of persecution is. Nor is there explicit trinitarian content to any of these arguments. Nevertheless, the trinitarian dynamics I highlighted above should be seen as operating just below the surface of Augustine's vision of the true church of the martyrs.

In his sermons on the Psalms of Ascent, Augustine frequently lauds the virtue of the martyrs, often in the context of a martyr's feast day.[7] Augustine always returns to that paramount virtue, the martyr's hope, which turns upon the distinction between worldly and heavenly goods:

> People of the world are unhappily happy, but the martyrs were happily unhappy. For they were unhappy for a time, but they are happy in eternity; and even when they were unhappy for a time, they were considered to be more unhappy than they actually were. . . . Why do we rejoice down here [on earth]? Because of hope (*de spe*). And why do we rejoice up there [in heaven]? Because of the reality of the thing hoped for (*de re*). . . . Therefore the martyrs were patient in tribulation because they rejoiced in hope. . . . See why the martyrs endured so much, because they waited in patience for that which they could not yet see.[8]

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5. For this approach, see Optatus, *c. Parmen.* 1.13–20.

6. On the distinction between true and false martyrs in Augustine, see Burns and Jensen, *Christianity in Roman Africa*, 541–543.

7. Augustine preached *en. Ps.* 120 on the feast of St. Crispina and *en. Ps.* 127 on that of St. Felix.

8. *en. Ps.* 127.5.

For Augustine, their willingness to die does not in itself make martyrs into the ultimate moral exemplars; rather, their hope, which motivated them to endure such painful persecution, demonstrates how their minds and desires have been turned from the things of this world to the things of heaven.

Augustine's emphasis on the hope of the martyrs has an implicit anti-Donatist edge to it. For example, in interpreting the blessings promised to those who fear the Lord in Psalm 127, Augustine exhorts his audience to let the martyrs' hope be their hermeneutic:

> It would be disgraceful for us to celebrate the birthday party (*natalicia*) of the martyrs—of those servants of God who despised this world for the sake of eternal happiness—by interpreting what is written here as pertaining to the happiness of this present life.[9]

One of the major indictments Augustine makes against the Donatists is their category confusion between *spes* and *res*, mistaking this earthly church for the perfected communion of the heavenly Jerusalem. By redefining the martyrs as exemplars of proper hope, oriented not to this world but to the spiritual Jerusalem, Augustine undermines the Donatists' ability to claim to be the church of the martyrs. Though the Donatists condemn the Catholics as *traditores* in collusion with the persecuting powers, Augustine denies the Donatists' ability to identify with the martyrs since their ecclesiology denies the true hope of the martyrs.

To intensify this anti-Donatist definition of the martyrs' hope, Augustine describes how the hope of the martyrs is necessarily manifest in ecclesial unity. The martyrs hope "that what has taken place in our Lord first of all may be realized also in ourselves," that is, that we may be resurrected with him.[10] The martyrs

> looked to the dawn watch at which their Lord rose, and they saw that before he rose up he had suffered the very same type of things that they were suffering, and they did not despair since after such sufferings they were going to rise again to eternal life.[11]

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9. *en. Ps.* 127.2.

10. *en. Ps.* 129.6.

11. *en. Ps.* 129.11.

This rising to eternal life is the hope of the martyrs. But their hope is not merely to rise *like* Christ; instead, "this body [of Christ, that is, the church] must hope for what has gone before in the head [Christ]."[12] Augustine thus returns to the church as the body of Christ. The hope of the martyrs to rise with Christ requires participation in Christ's body within the unity of the church.

Lest anyone should think that the body of Christ in which the martyrs ascend is the Donatist communion, Augustine connects this language to the Pauline command to "bear one another's burdens" (Gal 6:2), along with a reflection on how one cannot be contaminated by another's sin unless one assents to that sin.[13] This anti-Donatist view of an intermixed church in which the community is not polluted by the sins of the wicked members is the context for the martyrs' hope of ascent. They do not simply hope to escape the physical pain of torture and violence; they hope to reach the heavenly Jerusalem, where the burdens of earthly ecclesial life will be lifted. Augustine describes this dynamic when he illustrates how the martyrs follow the example of Christ:

> The Lord himself taught that it is necessary to ascend from the valley of weeping when, for our sake, he deigned to be humbled unto death on a cross and to suffer. Let us not abandon this example. The martyrs understood this valley of weeping. How do they understand? Because they ascended from the valley of weeping so that they might be crowned.[14]

To begin in the valley of weeping is to begin in this life, within the intermixed church, with all of its imperfections. Someone who refuses to acknowledge the earthly condition of the church as still located in the valley of weeping cannot be considered a true martyr.

Augustine not only redefines the nature of martyrdom, but he also redefines the nature of persecution itself, again in an effort to deny the Donatists their claim to be the church of the martyrs still suffering such persecution. The most thorough example of Augustine's anti-Donatist redefinition of persecution comes in *Io. ev. tr.* 11, when he compares the

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12. *en. Ps.* 129.12.

13. *en. Ps.* 129.4–5.

14. *en. Ps.* 120.1.

Donatists to Hagar and Ishmael by way of Paul's interpretation of their story in Galatians 4. For Augustine, the key element is that Hagar and Ishmael are sent away because Ishmael "played with" or "mocked" his brother, behavior that Augustine connects to the "mocking" claim of the Donatists to possess the true sacrament of baptism.[15] In being sent away, Hagar and Ishmael certainly suffer hardship, but this is not persecution; it is correction. This leads Augustine to the Donatists themselves:

> [A] These people [the Donatists] even dare to say that they are accustomed to suffering persecution at the hands of the Catholic kings or Catholic emperors. What persecution do they endure? Bodily affliction. If, however, they suffer sometime or in some way, they themselves must know and search their consciences. Nevertheless, they suffered bodily affliction. [B] But the persecution that they caused is more serious. Beware when Ishmael wants to play (*ludere*) with Isaac, when he flatters you, when he offers another baptism. Respond, "I already have baptism." For if this baptism [the one you already have] is true, then he who wishes to give you another one wishes to mock (*illudere*) you. Beware the persecutor of the soul. For if the Donatist party ever suffers anything at the hands of Catholic emperors, it suffers bodily, not in a deceiving of the spirit. . . . [C] Behold, the free woman [Sarah] afflicts the slave-girl [Hagar], but the apostle does not call that persecution. The servant plays with the master, and the apostle calls that persecution. . . . Just so, when God wishes to excite the authorities against heretics, against schismatics, against the destroyers of the church, against the extinguishers of Christ, against the blasphemers of baptism—let them not wonder that God excites the authorities so that Hagar might get a beating from Sarah. [D] Let Hagar recognize herself, and let her bow her neck, because when she was humiliated and left her mistress, the angel came upon her and said, "What's wrong, Hagar, slave-girl of Sarah?" When she complained about her mistress, what did she hear from the angel? "Return to your mistress." For this reason, therefore, she was afflicted, so that she would return. And if only she would return so that her offspring, like the sons of Jacob, would have the inheritance with their brothers.[16]

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15. *Io. ev. tr.* 11.12.

16. *Io. ev. tr.* 11.13.

I have divided this lengthy quote into four sections in order to explicate the moves that Augustine makes. In A, Augustine acknowledges that the Donatists have suffered physically at the hands of Catholic authorities, but he does not admit that this counts as "persecution" per se. Suffering bodily harm is not necessarily persecution. In B, he compares the suffering the Donatists endure to the true persecution they inflict, the latter being more severe because it afflicts the soul. The material and spiritual distinction that defined the hope of the martyrs also undergirds this contrast, as Augustine implicitly condemns the Donatists for focusing solely on their own physical suffering without acknowledging the more serious spiritual damage they are committing on others.

In sections C and D, Augustine offers a version of his *coge intrare* argument in favor of imperial coercion in religious matters. C argues that the physical suffering the Donatists experience is actually for their own good. God sometimes operates through such bodily harm for the benefit of the soul. D clarifies what that good is, namely, that as Hagar was encouraged to return to Sarah, the Donatists might be reformed and return to the church.[17]

Augustine's understanding of imperial coercion as the corrective work of God is not simply an attempt to justify the use of civil power; it is also an attempt to deny the Donatists the identity of martyrs. Augustine is not justifying persecution; he is redefining persecution and denying the Donatists' claim to have suffered it. Thus he reclaims the authority of martyrdom from those who had styled themselves the church of the martyrs.

Nowhere in this redefinition of martyrdom and persecution does Augustine invoke the Trinity or deploy pro-Nicene exegetical principles. Yet, when read in light of the trinitarian ecclesiology that I have unpacked in previous chapters, Augustine's vision of the true church of the martyrs may be understood as inherently trinitarian. The martyrs are characterized by their hope, a hope that turns upon the intellectual and affective distinction between the material and the spiritual, between this world and the heavenly Jerusalem to which they are traveling. In Chapter 1, I demonstrated how this moral epistemology is integral to Augustine's trinitarian theology, particularly as expressed in the first book of *On the Trinity*, which is roughly contemporaneous with our sermon series. The fact that Augustine defines the martyrs, who are so central to the identity of the church, as paragons of this moral epistemology further demonstrates the

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17. See also *ep. Io.* 10.10.

way in which Augustine's understanding of the reformation of thought and desire unites his trinitarian and ecclesiological discourse.

Beyond the martyrs' virtue of hope, however, Augustine emphasizes how the martyrs maintain the unity of the church in a way that enables them to ascend with Christ in his body. This was the central theme of Chapter 2, in which I showed how Augustine's understanding of the unity of the church in the body of Christ is connected to a pro-Nicene understanding of the revelatory work of the Son, who leads us to sight of the Father. This trinitarian dynamic is at the heart of the ascent for which the martyrs hope.

Moreover, the martyrs' maintenance of unity in the midst of the valley of weeping requires the cultivation of love that "bears one another's burdens." This is accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit who is love. As I described in Chapter 3, the ecclesial work of the Spirit manifests his eternal *proprium* whereby he is the mutual love of Father and Son. The martyrs' ability to cleave to the rest of the church ought to be understood as the operation of that Spirit who gives what he himself is. Because of this, the unity of the church in love is a way in which we receive a share of the trinitarian life through the gift of the love of the Spirit.

Finally, Augustine denies that the Donatists suffer persecution because any hardship imposed upon them is in fact a type of correction meant to lead them back to the unity of the church, just as Hagar is urged to return to her mistress. This exhortation to return to unity suggests the effective work of baptism that is manifest in that unity, as I discussed in Chapter 4. The unity to which the Donatists are exhorted to return is a consequence of baptism because baptism itself is an action of the inseparably operating Trinity whereby the Son eternally gives the Spirit. This manifestation of the unity of nature and power in the simplicity of the godhead effects a simplicity within the church in such a way that the life of the church is incorporated into the life of the Trinity. When the Donatists "mock" like Ishmael by offering a false baptism and refuse to return to the unity of the Catholic church, they deny and separate from the unity of God, who operates in every true baptism to give the Spirit of love to the body of Christ.

Augustine's ecclesiology is subtly trinitarian. He does not propose an explicit trinitarian analogy for the union of multiple persons in the one church. He does, however, use pro-Nicene exegesis and principles to construct his image of the church against the Donatists. The consequence of this theological approach is a church constituted by the work of the Trinity

and, because of this, incorporated into the life of the Trinity as the church shares the love of the Holy Spirit in the Son's body.

In a study focused on a series of forty-one sermons preached within a seven-month period, I have necessarily left many questions unanswered or only partially explored. Two of these questions are worth identifying as avenues for future research. First, Augustine does not say much about the Eucharist in these sermons, and therefore neither do I. But as others have argued, the Eucharist is as much the sacrament of unity in North Africa as baptism is.[18] Further investigation ought to be made into how Augustine's Eucharistic theology is or is not informed by the pro-Nicene dynamics I have highlighted in these anti-Donatist sermons, especially as related to the incorporation of the church into the person of Christ.

The most suggestive question I have left open, however, is how exactly the church shares in the life of the Trinity. I have often used phrases like "participates in" or "is incorporated into" or "is caught up in" to describe the way in which the work of the Trinity in establishing the church as the body of Christ united by the love of the Spirit connects the life of the church to the life of the Trinity. I have intentionally left this idea vague because Augustine does not develop a full theology of participation in these sermons. Moreover, a sufficiently thorough examination of what such participation actually means for Augustine would be well beyond the scope of this project.[19] My argument in this book points toward something that must, for the moment, be left unexplored and unknown. But such is the life of trinitarian faith. Our desire to understand that which we do not yet know is the very love that leads to the sight of God.

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18. See esp. J. Patout Burns, "The Eucharist as the Foundation of Christian Unity in North African Theology," *AugStud* 32, no. 1 (2001): 1–23. For a more recent consideration of the relationship between the Eucharist, the worshiping community, and Augustine's trinitarian theology, see John C. Cavadini, "Trinity and Apologetics in the Theology of St. Augustine," *Modern Theology* 29, no. 1 (2013): 69–73.

19. On this topic, the work of David Meconi resonates well with the reading of Augustine that I have provided here. See esp. Meconi, *The One Christ: St. Augustine's Theology of Deification* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2013); Meconi, "Becoming Gods by Becoming God's: Augustine's Mystagogy of Identification," *AugStud* 39 (2008): 61–74; Meconi, "The Incarnation and the Role of Participation in St. Augustine's Confessions." *AugStud* 29, no. 2 (1998): 61–75; Meconi, "Augustine's Early Theory of Participation." *AugStud* 27 (1996): 79–96.

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* All Psalms are listed according to the LXX and Vulgate numbering; see 2 n.3.